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# **Space, Place and Site Through Moving Image Installation Art Practice: *Entering Elsewhere***

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of Bath Spa University, Bath, England, for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **Abstract.**

This practice-led thesis primarily investigates space, place and site through experiencing moving image installation art practice, focusing on ways in which artists use site as moving image subject. Integral to this examination is my own work, exploring specific sites through filming, editing and installation. By purposeful experimentation, visual finding and discoveries, questions emerging from practice are raised, and are examined through practice and mutual engagement with other contemporary art works.

An experiential and comparative approach has led to critical engagement of strategies and tactics used by contemporary artists, shown in the U.K. between 2002 and 2009, including Willie Doherty, Ori Gersht, Ergin Çavuşoğlu, Matt White and Lucy Gunning. I also draw upon selected works from moving image's history, through which further commonalities are made apparent, examining works by Robert Smithson, Andy Warhol, Margaret Tait, William Raban and Tacita Dean (among others). The works are investigated through first hand experience, through visual analysis including artist and gallerist interviews, and through articulating the making of my own installations.

Space, place and site are critically examined through encountering the projected image, acknowledging that while the works experienced possess powerful imagery, their impact extends beyond purely aesthetic definitions.

This written component engages with the event of the artwork as a mode of being that occurs in the interval between the viewer and the observed subject. Relevant theoretical approaches are used to consider the works drawing on a broad base of literature, including: Edward Soja, Doris von Drathan and Irit Rogoff in order to investigate the central concepts.

The discursive account interrogates a complex terrain, opening out apperceptive approaches made in terms of filming, editing and installation, constructing a vibrant and reciprocal research field; one that suggests that there exists a collective field of work, which until now has lain submerged in the broader picture of moving image installation. It emerges here for the first time as a (selected) focused view of a significant body of site oriented moving image installations, thus serving as a context for approaches made in my own art practice.

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And lastly to my family in Heaven, I wish you were here to see this.

## Introduction and Aims.



Figure 1. *The abandoned garden* (2004)  
digital site still. Michele Whiting.

The roots of this research can be found in my MFA studies at Bath School of Art and Design, Bath Spa University, in a body of work entitled *crossing the boundary* (2004) made in response to my relationship with an abandoned garden. The garden had once been a model post-war country cottage garden. The owner of the house died and the property fell into the hands of a developer. These circumstances added a sense of urgency to claim the garden for my memory. The longer the garden had lain abandoned the more it disappeared from view. I found a way in through the boundary hedge, and for a time - cut off from the outside world - I explored the space through processes of drawing, moving-image installation and sound installation. My response through the video process was wholly experiential in nature, and a direct result of being in - of becoming an intimate witness to the site. Through first hand research the site was emphasised right from the work's conception, and remained its focus. My response via practice raised many

questions and these became both catalyst and inspiration, in other words, the starting point for this PhD research.



Figure 2. *Tautegorical* (2005) single channel projection, sound, running time 3mins 58.  
 Prema Arts Centre Gallery (2005) Michele Whiting.

My submission for the award of PhD is structured in three parts. Part One is my own moving image practice which may be viewed in/as installations, whose methods, such as notebooks, image-making, sample experiments with video, audio materials, collaborations and personal narratives may be viewed as Part Two on disc. Part Three is this written contextual study, which includes an examination of selected site oriented moving image works, including my own, that have been exhibited in the U.K. during the period 2004-2009 considering space, place and site through these encounters.

## **Part One and Part Two**

**Part One** is an exhibition of Site Oriented Moving Image Installation made as a culmination of my research. **Part Two** is my practice documentation, which sits between this and the written component. I refer to it in footnotes throughout the text to draw the reader's attention to methods, strategies and tactics experienced in my art practice, in this way my aim is to provide evidence of the making process in its broadest reflexive sense.

On the disc (situated in the inside front page of this document) is a guide to reading, and it would be advisable for the reader to familiarise themselves with its workings at this juncture.

## **Part Three**

This written element primarily interrogates notions of space, place and site through encounters with site oriented moving image installations, or SOMII, as I shall now refer to them<sup>1</sup> shown in the UK between 2004 and 2009. In the process of discovery, I experienced and uncovered strategies and tactics used by artists, that through grouping them together, and discussing them alongside selected historical examples and my own experiences as artist/researcher, aims to offer the reader a selective view that calls into question - and this emerges as a secondary aim – whether these works can indeed be called a category or type of art practice in their own right. My overarching aim being, to draw together strands of practice across time, asserting commonalities and mutualities as a means of framing the research field, so as to contextualise my own art practice.

When I started out, I was following an intuitive hunch that moving image installations with site at their conceptual core, play a quiet but

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<sup>1</sup> My decision to refer to the collective works as SOMII is at this stage purely practical. The phrase site oriented moving image installation being hard to digest in some complex sentence constructions.

significant part in contemporary art practice. Through the process of collating and making works, I have come to recognise a growing discursive field, and although in discussing the works I emphasise their contemporary nature - which ultimately situates them within the context of current debate - I also travel back in time to re-read selected historical examples, thus aiming to reflect artists' ongoing fascination with space, place and site that has lasted over many decades.

Three main research questions emerge that are asked of my own practice and the practice of other artists:

- How do artists navigate site as subject in moving image installation?
- How can an artist, in using site as subject (i.e. as the plane of material) exceed the material to bring the work into an area of sensation beyond depiction of place?
- How and in what ways can site be imaginatively delimited, contained and so consumed by the viewer?

My objective has been to examine space, place and site by experiencing them as subjects in the form of my own moving image installation art practice in conjunction with experiencing the works of other artists. This research approach thus draws upon the historical, the recent, the imagined, the remembered and the real, to engage with a genuine need to move toward a criticality that can sustain many viewpoints, thereby embracing criticism/knowledge beyond a singular static view. This is particularly appropriate in relation to the complex and varied space that may be needed to articulate site oriented moving image installation works. My aim is to reflect the

authentic complexities in space, place and site that an artist deals with in the challenge of their practice.<sup>2 3</sup>

There is a shift away from formal aesthetic or theoretical properties finding focus instead through comparative analysis. By grouping together selected works, and through a combination of re-looking and re-experiencing, my aim is to establish a different but valuable dialogue, one that could articulate the visual concerns, sensations and phenomena experienced beyond material depiction. By discussing the works alongside each other, consideration can be given to a strategy or way of working that emerges in terms of shared concerns rather than similarities, thus providing an account of works that share space, place and site as subject.

My objective is to understand the works' impact experienced in an indeterminate space – a space that I will argue - through witnessing and experiencing the common bonds of practice, is none-the-less normative in this type of visual experience. In so doing, I aim to follow less well-trodden paths, acknowledging '*certain conjunctions of objectivities and subjectivities*'<sup>4</sup> within the framework of my discourse. This is in keeping with, and maintains a geographic presence sympathetic to site, whilst aiming to assert the presentation of affects.<sup>5</sup>

Taking inspiration from Doris von Drathen<sup>6</sup> and Irit Rogoff<sup>7</sup> my objective is to both observe and preserve SOMII's spacial vitality,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A need that was clearly expressed by curator Catherine Elwes in a gallery conversation with Steven Ball and Mike Latta at Artsway Hampshire, *Figuring Landscapes* 25th November 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Rendell J, *Site-Writing* in Sharon Kivland, Jasper Joseph-Lester and Emma Cocker, (eds) *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*, Vol4. (Sheffield: Site Gallery, 2005) pp169-171.

<sup>4</sup> Rogoff I, (2000)

<sup>5</sup> Affects go beyond feeling to become a thing in itself - a being, whose validity lies in itself. Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) pp466-467

<sup>6</sup> von Drathen D, (2004)

<sup>7</sup> Rogoff I, (2000)

<sup>8</sup> von Drathen D, (2004) p10. See methodology chapter.

arguing in favour of the artists' search for sensation as being, through investigating and recounting new realities rather than merely representing them.<sup>9</sup>

*'...They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them, they draw us into the compound.'*<sup>10</sup>

In positioning my own site oriented installations alongside the works of others, and in articulating my practice in the following text, my aim is to utter from an artist's perspective experiences and discoveries made, thus asserting the practical nature of this enquiry. I have used footnotes, annotated to my practice documentation, in order to draw the readers' attention to responses made to critical theory articulated through practice.

**Chapter 1** focuses on notions of site, space and place. Irit Rogoff, Mike Crang and Doreen Massey's understanding form a backdrop to this chapter, whilst Edward Soja's theory of *Thirdspace* pre-occupies much of my thinking. In searching for a reading of the works in the following chapters - that inhabit a shared space somewhere between real and imagined – the notion of *Thirdspace* offers ways in which to examine site, place and site in conjunction with moving image installations. These notions set the scene for the questions I am asking of various approaches taken by artists in the making of SOMI in the following chapters.

**Chapter 2** draws threads of history together, it is not an exhaustive history, but selected; aiming to form contours for the following chapters in which further histories are embedded. In this way, particular works by Andy Warhol and Robert Smithson are condensed, in order to establish a mode of reading that investigates

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<sup>9</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994)

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) pp466-467.

moving image works from a position other than the represented image. Collectively they act as a foundation to the works explored throughout the thesis.

In **Chapter 3** strategic notions of familiarity are investigated. My analysis focuses on understanding locale as nexus through which artists produce affects; interrogating personal relationships to local as a condition of specific site, producing (as Yi Fu Tuan suggests) a compound relation between feeling and thought<sup>11</sup>.

Initially focusing on SOMII by Michael Landy and Darren Almond, the object/image relations of the installations are considered through an intensity of familiarity found within them. With historical focus, Margaret Tait's 1954 film *Portrait of Ga* is discussed. Tait locates the body of her mother as *inscriber* of landscape, thus asserting propinquity as an historical strategic device used since the inception of Expanded Cinema,<sup>12</sup> indicating threads of mutual artistic concerns beginning to be revealed across moving image-time.<sup>13</sup>

In **Chapter 4** the fixed point of view lens is examined in terms of the framed image. Its multiple combinations are then discussed considering synthetic space between screens as affect, arguing for it as strategy for conceptually moving across installation's uneven space - taken into account and discussed as a tactic of art's production. I examine pre-digital works by Chris Welsby, *Shoreline1* (1977) and William Raban, *Thames Barrier* (1977) and subsequently through this, uncover synthetic geographies in the work of Lucy Gunning, *Esc* (2004), and Matt White, *This is the Place* (2008). My own SOMII *Percipere* is examined, which observes site over time. These works collectively describe ways in which we (artists)

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<sup>11</sup> Tuan, Yi-Fu, (1977)

<sup>12</sup> Propinquity as a term encapsulates relations between space, place and relationship, the Oxford Shorter Dictionary definition, describes it as nearness, closeness, proximity in space, in blood or relationship, in nature.

<sup>13</sup> A term originally coined in the 1960's by Stan Van Der Beek, now used to describe moving image that questions the spectator's construction of time/space relations.



construct synthetic space, provoked by durational static filming – which emerges within the installation space.

History and Memory are argued for as strategies to investigate place in **Chapter 5**. Collective cultural memory and place making, are discussed through both the viewers' position and camera position in relation to the work of Willie Doherty. Sacred Space is evoked through camera techniques, and discussed in Ori Gersht's *SOMII*. Archive, imagined archives and Victor Burgin's notion of remembered film fragments are also raised, and my own work *Coast, six short minutes*, emerges in relation to notions of history and memory as symptoms of site.

**Chapter 6** discusses multiple projection installations focusing on two works in particular: Ergin Çavuşoğlu's *Point of Departure* (2006) and Melik Ohanian's *Seven Minutes Before* (2004). Architecture of sound is interrogated in the work of Cavusoglu, whilst a choreographed visual geography emerges as strategy through witnessing Ohanian's *SOMII*. My multi-screen *SOMII Hollow* (2008) is discussed, which explores the space of site through fixed point of view videoing, the co-ordinates of the site being embedded within the camera work. The site's geography thus remains internal to the finished work. Orientation is fore-grounded across the works under discussion in this chapter, and further developed through performance witnessed as material strategy.

## Methodology

*‘... to experience in the active sense requires that one ventures forth into the unfamiliar and experiment with the elusive and the uncertain’.*<sup>14</sup>

*‘... we possess perceptual sensors that involve not only the gaze but indeed our whole being...’*<sup>15</sup>

Through the following pages, methodologies will be examined that have shaped this investigation. Split into two sections: firstly, my own personal practice, and secondly, the practice of other artists. However, from the outset, the articulation of such research/practice has remained a challenging issue. I am ever responsive to my own practice, from communicating the basic philosophical positions to the diverse ways in which I have employed experimental methodologies. After all, I am first and foremost an artist responding to *‘real world research’*,<sup>16</sup> acknowledging the complexity of reflexive activity. This also reflects much of the uncomfortable nature of a research/practice in a complex and hard to define area.

## Part One. Personal Practice.

At the beginning of this research journey, I began looking at practice methods that engaged with qualitative methods of humanist geographers using tools, both practical and strategic shared across disciplines.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tuan Yi Fu, (1977). p9.

<sup>15</sup> von Drathen D, (2004)

<sup>16</sup> Gray C, and Malins J, (2004) p21.

<sup>17</sup> This is in itself not a new concept, for example an exhibition at the Royal West of England Bristol 2005. *‘Lan2d Beyond Landscape?’* An exhibition that was situated on the cusp of realising that contemporary practioners are engaged with a broader

I did this because it was apparent that through lens based media, the geographic fieldworker could claim a parallel existence with that of artists interested in landscape, as it has been an increasingly important part of their observational practice since the late 1960's, when Humanist Geography co-emerged alongside technology such as Sony's Portapak camera.

In technological terms video and digitisation have become more accessible through affordability, and so they have been enveloped into contemporary art's visual vocabulary and to a lesser extent integrated into the contemporary geographer's toolkit. In this way visual, lens-based techniques have augmented a close reading of the questions that both a geographer and an artist ask of landscape, enabling:<sup>18</sup>

*'...understanding of the human world by studying people's relations with nature, their geographical behavior as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place'.<sup>19</sup>*

Today's contemporary site oriented artists equally investigate the inseparability of both site and cultural context: Francis Alÿs' *When Faith Moves Mountains*, (2002), is a testament to inclusivity in that, the political and social tensions of the city became internal to both the narrative and the site through the 'event' of the work, a tendency that has become ever more apparent since Robert Smithson perceived landscape as event in outside space.<sup>20</sup>

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debate beyond the traditional historic aesthetic concerns of landscape painting. The title: *beyond landscape?* Illuminates the concerns of the practitioners included in the exhibition, but can give little intimation of the scope that artists are reaching towards.

<sup>18</sup> Buttimer A, (1977) p12. See also Rose G, (2001) Contemporary artists who engage with site across disciplines include Mark Dion, Layla Curtis, Pierre Huyghe among many others.

<sup>19</sup> Tuan Yi-Fu, (1976) p 276.

<sup>20</sup> On 11 April 2002, 500 volunteers were supplied with shovels and asked to form a single line at the foot of a giant sand dune. They pushed the sand a specified distance and the 1600 foot sand dune was moved by 4 inches from its original position. Francis Alÿs talks about *When Faith Moved Mountains* Artforum summer 2002, p147. Cited in Doherty C, 2009. pp39-41.

Geographers and artists seem to be asking similar qualitative questions,<sup>21</sup> seeking an understanding of site, through questioning the structures and signifying systems by which knowledge is conveyed and organised. Artists' however, also enunciate imaginative findings, and thus distance is created away from 'human geographers quantifiable parameters'.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary artists create site/place, absorbed dialogues, through working with archive material, talking heads, documentary, and the internet. In this way an inter-material reading of site emerges: historical, internal (personal), external, (factual) and imagined.<sup>23</sup>

The following texts aim to re-assert the progression of the artist, past geographies' external realities, engaging with a space beyond - a space that speaks of an additional - possibly interior - dialogue with the viewer, maybe the '*resonance*' that Geographer Yi Fu Tuan admitted was missing from the fixed point of view of Smithson's contemporaneous, unmovable geographer.

Three moving image installations have been produced: *Hollow, Coast, six short minutes* and *Percipere*. Each site-oriented project has been made in response to an initial set of criteria, beyond that each questions what may constitute sensation within gallery space.

The map taken from my notebooks, (below) describes three sites and activities, the work has been produced as a response to the initial research question: How and in what ways can moving image installation as practice investigate specific site as subject?

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<sup>21</sup> For example: Mark Dion, *The Thames Dig* (1999) Tate Modern. See: Coles A, and Dion M, (1999).pp17 and pp22.

<sup>22</sup> Geographical review, 81//1/100-107, (1991),Tuan, Y.i-Fu. *A View of Geography*.

<sup>23</sup> For example [www.Depford.tv](http://www.Depford.tv) project. Since 2005, artists, writers, film-makers and students have been contributing visual material as critiques of the regeneration of Depford to Depford T.V. for open use on a database. See also Susan Collins, *Transporting Skies* (2002).

Strategies and tactics that have been investigated can be read around the circle. Within these strategies lie technical procedures, which will be expanded upon as the thesis progresses.

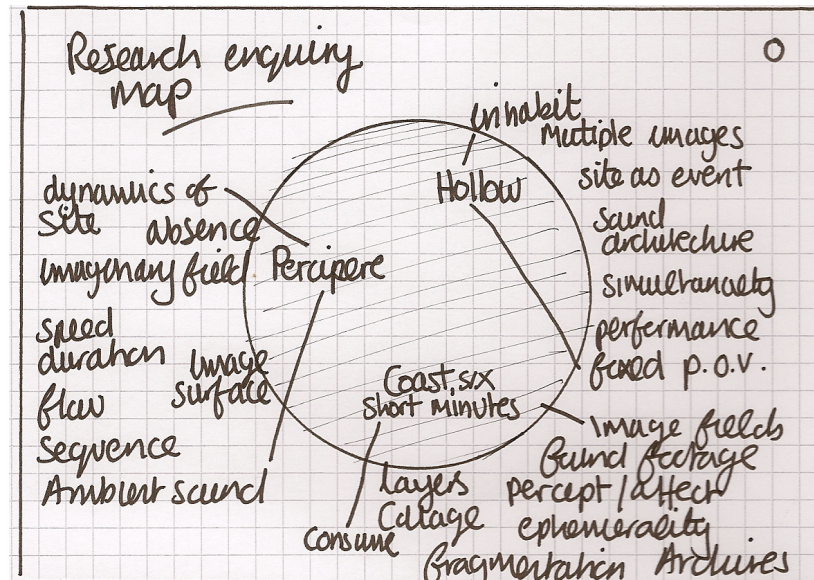


Figure 3. Map of research enquiry in relation to specific sites.  
From notebooks, Michele Whiting (2006-9)  
See also Practice Documentation, N.P.D.02 and N.P.D.03

Sometimes these investigations have originated because of another artist's SOMII that I have experienced, which has fed directly into my studio work, or an enquiry has emerged from the heart of my work that I have investigated through engaging with other artists' works, thus leading to conceptual interlacing and de-interlacing occurring across space/time. The nature of it is that research processes feel inseparable, and time has allowed experiments to form through experience, bought about by perception.<sup>24</sup>

Interpreting imaginative findings outside of '*human geographers quantifiable parameters*',<sup>25</sup> means using my lens as a broad language, mapping colour, form and movement as a way to reveal perceptual change. This is a phenomenological attempt at

<sup>24</sup> Perception of other artists' work, of sites, and of their installation sites, gathered together in the event of practice/research.

<sup>25</sup> Tuan Yi Fu, (1991).

deconstructing the experience of place through the lens and subsequently through projection in the space of the gallery, not to show mimetically or critically the distribution of things in space, but to investigate how experience of place may be reclaimed, albeit intrinsically as encounter by the viewer.<sup>26</sup>

To enable my physical investigation, I have engaged with applied geographic methods as part of an interdisciplinary approach, integrating visual practice and analytical processes. These methods (below) have in reality, opened up conceptual space in which to consider site.<sup>27</sup> They have enabled me to create a distance between myself as artist within a site, and visual matter produced through the cameras, thus - to an extent - being able to maintain a pragmatic position during the event of filming, whilst acknowledging the camera's gestural capabilities.

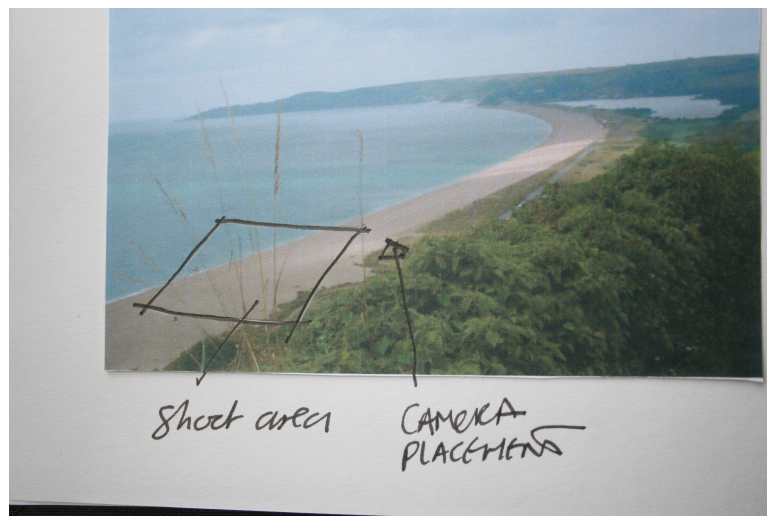


Figure 4. From site notebooks. Michele Whiting (2006)

<sup>26</sup> Panofsky E, (1972) p.7.

<sup>27</sup> See Practice Documentation S.P.D.01 and S.P/S.04.

## Sampling

I have used a methodological framework of 'sampling' throughout my enquiry, enabling me to move across time, textual material, site and artworks, which through maintaining my research position<sup>28</sup>, leads me step by step towards constructing the research.

*To sample*: to take a portion or a piece that is representative of a whole; a word used in geographic practice to extract both qualitative and quantitative data from a site.

Over the last 10 years sampling has become commonplace, not just images but also texts, music and sound. Sampling has become a method for advertising and entertainment, occupying social cultural space, often used to explore new ideas and image combinations, as virtual layering of seemingly heterogeneous concepts, images and disciplines. Sampling engages both linguistically and materially with digitisations' contemporary realm. Techno-arts such as vj-ing rely on sampling and self generated images - hotly contested issues of copyright have put V.J's into the arena of generating their own images as a less costly alternative.<sup>29</sup>

*'Sampling allows us to make a mark on this landscape that is so omnipresent, a mark that allows us to trace and find cracks on the surface. It is a very basic human instinct. ... A sort of future primitive act of location in a world of dislocation.'*<sup>30</sup>

Why have I set myself such parameters?

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<sup>28</sup> For in depth explanation of my research position, see pages 33-36.

<sup>29</sup> 'Natural Rhythms Trilogy' by Coldcut and Hextatic sampled segments of a National Geographic style footage, cutting up images of beetles tapping on trees, flowers opening and closing, trees falling and then matching rhythmic manipulated sounds to the images. In an essay, 'Listening to Pictures' a/v *From a Sound Perspective*, Robin Rimbaud aka Scanner writes about the parity of sound to visual imagery and the emergence of vj-ing as a visual performance during the rise of video technology. Faulkner/D-Fuse Michael, pp 027-029.

<sup>30</sup> Faulkner /d-fuse Michael, 2006. p029.

In making my own SOMII, I use sampling to explore the site, not as passive observation or documentation, but as a direct response to witnessing as a critical event of looking and perceiving. This recognises the remaining incompleteness of the original specific site as only ever being a metaphorical or intrinsic sample of the now absence of the original,<sup>31</sup> distancing the footage from criticism of indulgence or over subjectivity – thus placing the working method in a more secure framework.<sup>32</sup>

Before any videoing begins, site research takes place, including tacit knowledge, local histories and regional publications, much of which becomes interior to the finished installation.<sup>33</sup> Alongside this, I make numerous site visits that I use as planning sessions. I look at the outside space, its position and contingencies and spend time there. Observations take the form of notebook drawings, photography and video footage.<sup>34</sup>

Then I begin to take photographs, exploring the sites architectural remnants and characteristics. The intention is similar to a working rough.<sup>35</sup> I also shoot some early moving image for the same purpose. Both of these actions allow for critical in camera assessment of the potential of the site. It is also the starting point for gaining a creative foothold or the obverse of letting go.<sup>36</sup>

I have developed camera techniques that I have aligned to sampling methods used by geographers in their fieldwork, using their terms to express different camera shots, in order to emphasise the

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<sup>31</sup> See Practice Documentation S.P.D.01- 08.

<sup>32</sup> Grey C, and Malins J, (2004) p105..

<sup>33</sup> See Practice Documentation - North.

<sup>34</sup> See Practice Documentation S.P.D.02-08.

<sup>35</sup> Coming from a background in advertising my concept of a rough is an initial working idea committed to paper that can be discussed, worked on, improved or discarded, thus time is effectively put into the concept and not the detail/finish at this early stage.

<sup>36</sup> See Practice Documentation S.MI.01.



geographic nature of my enquiry. I have done this primarily as a means of gathering visual information that reflects my position as a 'Modest Witness'<sup>37</sup> and in so doing create objective separation or distance between me, site, my process and film references and theory: reflecting instead the work as investigations in outside (geographic) space.<sup>38</sup>

The camera moves (described below) are normal video camera work represented by a different use of language, they act as a mechanism to help think about the space as outside space, and not as location in the filmic sense of the word. Through thinking about videoing in this way my aim is to engage pragmatically with site, thus enabling me to think about sites not merely as co-ordinates on a map, but as spaces in which re-combinations of technological, human and nature relations may occur, in other words, sentient space.<sup>39</sup>

I have adapted my camera methods from three spacial sampling techniques, akin to geographic fieldwork: *Point Sampling*, *Line Sampling* and *Quadrat Sampling*, which in its simplest form:

**Line Sampling** = Hand held travel shots between two points in space. This footage takes the form of pedestrian 'fly on the wall' documentary style camera work and is interpreted through the lens as near fluid movement, used to record across the space of site, either in close proximity with matter within the site or from a more remote point of view. The objective is to admit myself as a subtext into the act of filming, which is in opposition to the filmic pan shot. See practice documentation in particular *Hollow* edits.

**Area/Quadrat Sampling** = Proximity shots in ordered space. (Quadrat) with this method, a selected area is filmed in a series of semi-randomised takes, often with a point of view that is mid or far distanced, but in some instances also includes extreme close-ups. In film terms the proximity shots range from long shot to close-up. This approach aims to give a structure to the act or event of filming. It enables a visual exploration of the site that

<sup>37</sup> For a full explanation of my research position please see pp33-35.

<sup>38</sup> For further influences see chapter 2 in the section on Robert Smithson.

<sup>39</sup> Massey D, (2005) p99-100, See also Practice Documentation. S.P.D.01-08.

maps colour, form and movement, and creates a distance for me (the artist) away from the matter within the site. See practice documentation in particular *Percepere* edits.

**Point Sampling** = Locked off multiple view-shots, are purposeful camera gestures that allow a spread of visual information to be gathered, through time/space across the site, viral like in their activity and spread of visual information gathered. Gesture can be understood as movement, to make a gesture is characteristically associated with hand movements, a camera gesture can therefore be principally thought of as conscious individual movement determined by the artist, which in this circumstance means that the camera is positioned and locked off (by the artist) with pre-conceptions of when, where and how long for. Their purpose is to generate enough footage to be able to effect transitions at the edit stage, which in film terms - as well as here- means that separate sequence shots from different point of views are edited together to generate the visual narrative. Used across the practice in this thesis.

On a negative side, I am often left with difficult visual and sound footage. Sampling the space of site as it is on the day of filming means the visual material is often contingent on what is happening: the weather conditions, time of year, other people moving through the site - many of these conditions are beyond my control and so difficulties may and do arise.

In the space of the studio/gallery sampling has enabled me to move easily back and forth between site, material and installation space, reflecting on relationships between myself (as maker) my surroundings and the moving image. Often in the studio I project the rough footage onto a flat surface, using different light conditions, mirrors etc, to make my observations. Projecting video dislocates the image from domestic concerns of the monitor.<sup>40</sup> Where appropriate the dimensions of the field of light can be controlled as can the physical trajectory of the beam of projected light used to describe

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<sup>40</sup> Also touched upon by Leighton T, (2008) See Practice Documentation.

space. At this stage, I see the concept of the site emerge from within the moving image, this is a deliberate attempt to let go of the research and allow the saturation of all sites' experience, in all its guises, to be articulated through this self reflexive process.

On a practical level, sampling the sites helps to construct the edits, by this I mean that I am able to sort through material, add to, discard and concentrate on sections of digitisation, whilst considering the original site, its physical, relational and numinous properties and their influence on the images before me. Later, in the installation space of the gallery, my experiential sampling method leads to purposeful encounters with space's unevenness, through enabling difficult notions such as disjunction, absence, dissonance, and rupture to be visually and aurally explored. This part of my process is about revealing, adding to and reflecting on, and is also about allowing myself to clarify an epistemology of practice through the heuristic process of exploration.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 5. This example shows a series of hand held shots, that explore the environment used specifically here to 'recover' the interior space of a hanger. Michele Whiting (2007)

Working in this way has also led me to understand that camera movement shares territory with trace, a characteristic noted by Lucy Gunning in exploring conditions of both *videoing* and *drawing*,<sup>42</sup> implying the notion of the camera as a tool, that within this research can be thought of in the same way as a brush or a pencil. To make a trace of site, is to use the energy of gesture to evoke space before

<sup>41</sup> As described by Gray C, and Malins J, 2004 pp58 See also Practice Documentation E.C.P.D.03.

<sup>42</sup> Kingston A, (2003) pp73-75.

the lens: asserting moving image as equivalent of the painter's colour, involving the very gesture in raising *perceptions to percept* and *lived affections to affect*.<sup>43</sup>

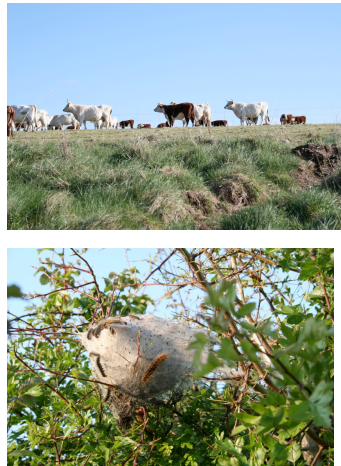


Figure 6. Two examples of Area Sampling used in *Hollow* and also *Percipere*, these examples show a choice of proximity, the left hand example was subsequently used within the structure of the video-work as a metaphor. Michele Whiting (2007)

In 1955 Victor Vasarely articulated moving image as potential artistic medium. He indicated basic concerns faced by artists, ‘...*the screen is plane but allowing motion, it is also space*.’<sup>44</sup> In enunciating this fundamental truism, he highlighted a visual concern still relevant in the present day, ascribing language to unpacking the individual anxieties of depth and proximity, claiming that the distant condenses and that the near dilates, that the artist has her/his own functioning internalised geometry, accessing the plastic realm without the need for measurement or calculation. This notion combined with critically comprehending is fundamental to my process. It reminds me that at the production stage, it is critical to let go of any adaptive methodology to allow creative activity to re-emerge. Thus any adaptive methods are seen as tools used to claim visual information as material/event from site.

<sup>43</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) p468.

<sup>44</sup> Stiles K, and Seltz P, (1996) p111.

With parity, contextual and theoretical research interlaces throughout my filming, observations, editing procedure and installation. The dialogue that is opened up is a conversation between aesthetic pleasure, structural/practical/theoretical concerns and pure purposeful experimentation as a kind of willfulness.

Beryl Graham refers to the *willing participant*<sup>45</sup> being integral to process, which in the context of this recursive/discursive dialogue is particularly apt by my being a willing witness<sup>46</sup> not just to the material fact of place, but also the imaginative subjective within the specific environment. In effect, by putting myself in the position of being witness to site, I have become a willing participant, observing and questioning, from deep within practice. The resultant works emerge as a combination of personal exploration of space, place and site and a nascent visual language.

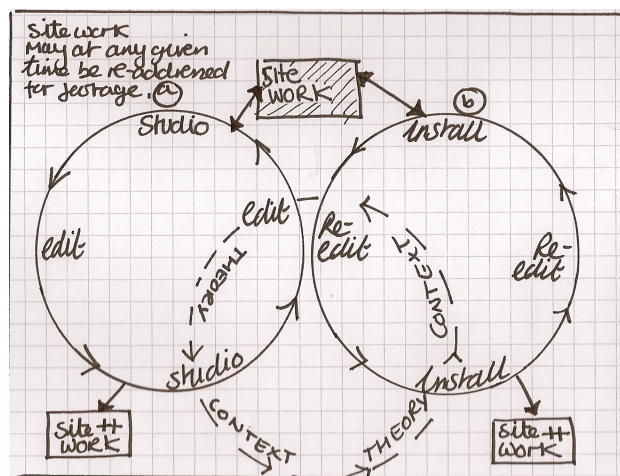


Figure 7. Recursive dialogic praxis diagram, showing flows of information and exchange. Illustrating how contextual and theoretical research interlaces throughout my filming, observations, editing procedure and installation.

From notebooks, Michele Whiting (2006-2009)

See also Practice Documentation. N.P.D.02

<sup>45</sup> Retrieved from [www.sunderland.ac.uk.1/26/06](http://www.sunderland.ac.uk.1/26/06) See also: Hanrahan S, (1998). pp29-31, also Macleod K, (1998) pp33-37, and Schon, D, (1981) cited in Jossey-Bass, and Alvesson M, and Skoldberg. (2000).

<sup>46</sup> For further explanation about my research position and how this effects my lines of vision/perception, see pages 33-36.

Found samples are footage taken from differing sources pertinent to the site that I am experiencing. I have used these found samples<sup>47</sup> and archive footage during the video-works construction, to create an interior space of information and enquiry stemming from notions of collective memory,<sup>48</sup> evoking particular time and sense of historical *intrinsic-ness*. Thus ontological notions of rupture, fracture and puncture are evidenced through archive material.<sup>49</sup> Within this process, re-visiting, re-telling, re-framing takes many forms.

*‘...one of which has provided a role for the subjective as a means through which it ‘legitimately’ punctures fixed notions of received culture, representations and histories.’*<sup>50</sup>

Engaging with layers, transparency and collage encourages my subjective experience to engage with other dimensions, succinctly described by Olafur Eliasson as being where all the bits and pieces are on top of each other in a pile, each picture having an impact on the one above and below it.<sup>51</sup>

The combination of witnessing one time/geographical condition on another during the editing process in conjunction with filming experientially, has had many technological difficulties and flaws to work through. However, observation of disjunctive visual time/spaces opens up further theoretical and imaginative space, in using the past and the present of the site. I map and trace the environment that it itself is enacted by.

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<sup>47</sup> Found samples in my visual dialogue include- selected excerpts from film, documentation of performance, photographs, video samples of photographs and video samples of site archaeology.

<sup>48</sup> See Practice Documentation E.C.P.D.02.

<sup>49</sup> Historically the relationship of found film to the moving image can be found in the work of experimental film - makers from the 1930's and onwards, used in many instances as an interruption to dismantle any convention of narrative.

<sup>50</sup> Connarty J, and Lanyon J, 2006.p64.

<sup>51</sup> See Practice Documentation S.P.D.08.

Thus mistakes and accidents are all included as future possibilities, as are unstructured sounds, material anomalies and other things that happen as a symptom of videoing experientially on site.<sup>52</sup>

I engage with imaginative moments in time, actively seeking to evoke the present-ness of sensation felt, experienced and witnessed within site. Thus perceiving, in combination with imagining is crucial, any narrative detected in the work stems from this intersection. Narrative (in its traditional linear sense) is not the ambition of this research project. Strands that are read in the work, issue from the experiential emergent nature of the image/site itself<sup>53</sup> and from the subjective experience of the viewer. For example, in the case of *Percipere* the narrative voice over stems directly from the experience of my repeated visits to the site and recording my experiences in my notebooks, thus the words uttered are my written notebook accounts.

I use the term installation with all the vitality of a verb, to denote a process of putting in,<sup>54</sup> an activity that conceptually moves towards video environments that pursue the notion of *an articulated interior*. Borrowing from sculptor Robert Morris in 1978:

‘...what I want to bring together for my model of “presentness” is the intimate inseparability of the experience of physical space... (combined with)... an ongoing immediate present’<sup>55</sup>

This conflation of experiences is where I situate my SOMII practice.

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas Edison said that of the 200 light bulbs that didn’t work, every failure told him something that he was able to incorporate into the next attempt. See Practice Documentation E.C.P.D.1 onwards.

<sup>53</sup> Even in the final cut of *Percipere*, the voice over speaks only the thoughts that I wrote down whilst spending time in the site.

<sup>54</sup> See appendix i glossary of terms.

<sup>55</sup> Morris R, (1978) p70.

## Part Two. Practices of Others.

My writing takes its inspiration from Doris von Drathen's *Vortex of Silence*, whose texts move away from art criticism, towards an analysis that recognises the event of the art work '*as a mode of being*' that occurs in the interval between the viewer and observed subject. This interval relies on sensation accrued from personal experience, and in following von Drathan's lead, I explore sensation as being - a method that positively embraces both geography's visual culture and my own subjective experiences as a witness who, through both visiting and making moving image installations, becomes knowingly implicated within them.<sup>56</sup>

I have chosen to highlight strategies/tactics/concerns that became apparent to me through viewing and making SOMII works, thus the bias of the text picks up on that thread, not to the exclusion of a more holistic view but in response to the sensation of being witness within the installations. I was initially apprehensive about how diverse they seemed, but as I worked on my own SOMII practice, shared concerns began to come into focus with some clarity, leading to groupings of strategies that has influenced the resulting chapters.

I have included historic works and others that I understand to have connectivity or to have influenced the works under discussion. There are more works to seek out, and more being made and exhibited, therefore this map (below) is merely a guide to works that I have read, visited, and contemplated, and a guide to the strategies and tactics apparent within them.

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<sup>56</sup> von Drathen D, (2004).





Similarly, although not adopting as a whole her critical methodology, my modest witness shares characteristics. She can never be ‘... *be simply oppositional. Rather s/he is suspicious, implicated, knowing, ignorant, worried and hopeful*’.<sup>58</sup>

By this I mean that I am not only in opposition, but opposed to duality, which entails always seeking an other way forward. Thus, by being suspicious I am not taking things at face value, but seeking other perspectives. By recognising my implicated-ness I am aligning myself to being in and becoming as. In my knowing-ness I understand my own partiality in the research process, whilst realising my ignorance clearly indicates my limitations. I also acknowledge the impossibility of the very position of being witness; but I am hopeful, in that I am seeking new adjacencies out of which I may intuit new paths and learn to trust my intuition.<sup>59</sup>

This attitude has enabled my lines of vision to form: helping me as an artist to find distance – as being - inside the site, across moving image, edit and installation, as well as embracing the viewpoint of being objectively exterior. Thus this position has generated a rigorous pursuit towards understanding site, place and spaces’ complexities experienced through moving image installations. Throughout the complex layers of my research, it has enabled me to strive for a rich vein of visual questioning, which will ultimately add to current spacial debates– authentically - from the artists’ point of view.

In the following texts, I have from time to time used a lyrical voice (of the modest witness) in an attempt to amplify sensation and feeling to be asserted faithfully in the bounds of writing a thesis. It appears as hand written witness statements from my notebooks - to differentiate it from the textual body.

Through this position the modest witness seeks to:

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<sup>58</sup> Haraway D, J, (1997) p3.

<sup>59</sup> Haraway D, J, (1997) p3.

*'...learn and practice the mixed literacies and differential consciousness that are more faithful to the way the world...actually works'.<sup>60</sup>*

This is my voice as the modest witness.<sup>61</sup>

I use my voice sparingly to keep alive feeling and expression in my research, to evoke vitality and sensation in the work. Sometimes my voice issues from deep within my notebooks, responsive to a particular situation. Sometimes it is a reflective voice looking back, rewinding, hovering on the outside, observing across information. I have needed this voice to continue to evoke the experience of the research as an ontological event.

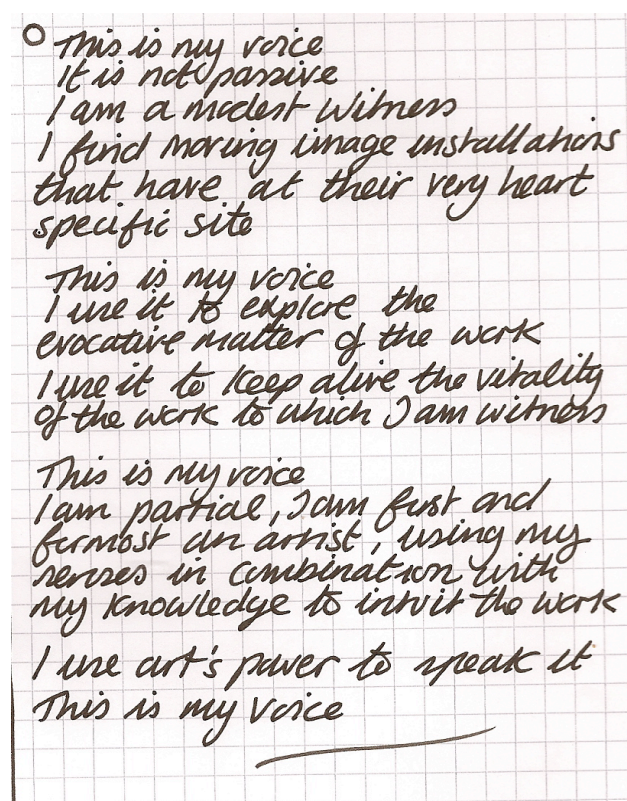


Figure 9. From notebooks, Michele Whiting (2009)

<sup>60</sup> Haraway D, J, (1997) p3.

<sup>61</sup> Haraway D, J, (1997).

My research position means that my lines of vision, the ways in which I am looking are made explicit, thus, distance is created in which to evaluate and determine the sites' visual matter. With this recognition comes the acceptance that although the way in which I perceive and investigate sites has unambiguous parameters <sup>62</sup>, they must also be malleable enough to allow me to travel laterally across other theories and analysis, in order to search faithfully for ways of representing that which I seek. Conceding also to situated knowledge's power to the degree that it is embraced in the act/event of looking.

I am after all a curious (modest) witness situated within my research, questioning space, place and site's role as subject in moving image installation. <sup>63</sup> Thus, considering works that have notions of space, place and site at their conceptual centre has less to do with location politics, or regionalism, and more to do with understanding and re-defining flows and networks of perceptual information as I encounter them.

The phrase, witnessing from within, resonates as an expression of artistic activity/perception, whose nature reflects the different elements of research that have become inextricably bound together and hard to articulate. Thought, creativity and theory are intertwined, they arise out of practice, developed and modified by it and, in this thesis, returns to it once again as a cyclical dialogue.

Through interrogating the works under the research spotlight, I enquire beyond the physical boundary of site into a realm of negotiated (often interior to the viewer) inter-activity within the temporal installation space; wherein relations between body, image and installations architecture fuse as an other space of enquiry, areas that distance the artist from the geographer. Thus enforcing a

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<sup>62</sup> This refers to my sampling method used to gather visual data from the site.

<sup>63</sup> Haraway, D, (1991) p9.

space away from what is documented, and instead moving closer to pricking at the conscience of John Berger's problematic, of the unsettled distance between what is seen and understood, text and visual.<sup>64</sup>

I envisage all apparent issues around moving image installation from my modest position, thus practical and theoretical perspectives are not fixed but move across phenomenology, interactionism, geophilosophy and visual culture. As such I employ qualitative data and analysis. This position has allowed me, not only to encounter other disciplines to some degree, but also to see with fresh eyes, as Erwin Panofsky saw, the '*intrinsic value*' in a work,<sup>65</sup> questioning a priori materials that transcend now and are embodied in the work through lived sensation.<sup>66</sup> Investigated here as the moment of first encounter, which von Drathen refers to as '*interval*'.<sup>67</sup>

Time has allowed perception to form through experience, Merleau-Ponty's perception of art as a rediscovery of looking frees the philosophy of perception from misunderstandings, understood within this text as being in the very event of perception. Thus encouraging a response to SOMIs that acknowledges the richness of their original being, respecting the autonomous nature of images by focusing attention on sensation/percepts/affects witnessed as space beyond the image frame.<sup>68</sup>

Inspired by Donna Haraway, and Doris von Drathen, I have tried to write between things, navigating between theories, realities,

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<sup>64</sup> Berger J, (1972) p7.

<sup>65</sup> Panofsky E, (1972) Panofsky's intrinsic meaning inherent (within a painting) as an unconscious act of condensing attitude, nationhood, class, and so on, can, I believe, be explored and experienced through conscious acts of manipulation (editing, installation and on) through moving image, furthering that which is materially inherent. In this way, an intrinsic meaning perceived as inherent within a moving image artwork may also be comprehended as a conjoining of time and site through my sampling process.

<sup>66</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) p473.

<sup>67</sup> von Drathen D, (2004).

<sup>68</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) p465. Also Merleau-Ponty M, (2004) p101.

sensation, imagination and articulated practices. This has from time to time called for a stance that seeks observation from a position of un-knowledge, undoing or putting to one side situated knowledge, causal to my position. Above all, my research questions stem from being an artist, thinking as an artist and understanding what is before me as an artist.

Inevitably my aims have shifted along with the research's overall emergent construction - seeing, hearing and feeling a moving image installation as a visitor and also as an artist has meant that exhibitions have been my primary research material, as have conversations with Ergin Cavusoglu, Matt White and Robin Klassnik. As well as attending artists' talks and curators' lectures I have listened to archived talk/interview recordings and have enjoyed the benefits of multi-media research. All of which, will be revealed through the written text.

Where I have seen fissures in the research, I have endeavored to address issues through my art practice and also through experiencing other installation works at first hand. I have witnessed the greater proportion of the installations under the research spotlight, and if it has not always been possible to witness them first hand, I have watched footage and read across catalogues and articles to build a picture.

I have given numerous conference papers and showed my SOMIIs in the U.K. and overseas. I have also discovered works that did not fit my criteria, (site being central to the concept of the work) but all of the works have added to this thesis in some way.

As an emerging artist, I needed to find suitable means of communicating with known artists and galleries, so I constructed a website which has been an invaluable source of reference for those contacted throughout the research journey. It has a good hit record

with the higher percentage of sustained and repeated visits, particularly from the USA ([www.michelewhiting.com](http://www.michelewhiting.com)).

The principal and primary aims of this research are to explore space, place and site through experiencing and investigating moving image installations, thus this has necessarily focused on explorations of contemporary and historical moving image installation, that have site space and place at their conceptual core, raising a secondary question, which asks if the selected works in this thesis can begin to be called a sub category.

Approaches are made through an experiential process, thus the research moves across practical experience and diverse texts to explore contemporary installations, to knowingly seek their affects and to investigate strategies and tactics used by contemporary artists in making this potential genre of work.

This contextual study is not a survey. It is a focused view of works that have framed and inhabited the research field within which I claim my own practice position. The text interrogates how, in terms of image-effects, an artist uses site as moving image subject, as the plane of material. Then, working to exceed the material, asks how they bring the moving image into an area of sensation beyond depiction.

This is not an exhaustive world-view, but a modest and selected history, based on connecting threads of information across time and space. In so doing, an individual picture will emerge of SOMII practices and their strategic approaches. A picture that has until now lain submerged in the bigger, broader history of moving image.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, there is at present no cohesive body of writing or collective mapping of this type of work, as a consequence I have set out to map a field of enquiry, aiming to

reveal the works' collective presence as a resource for other artists whose interests lead them here, serving as a context for my own art practice.



### Some notes on selected literature.

In conceptually collating SOMIs, I have been guided by my experiences as an artist. In some ways not having a wealth of dedicated literature in this specific area has worked to my advantage, offering certain conceptual freedom to consider and examine works independently and unconditionally. Instead, I engage with more than one discipline; site and installation's complex layers have been investigated through drawing upon texts written by geographers, geo-philosophers and cultural theorists, considered in combination with the SOMI that I am witnessing, thus aspects of a literature review are interwoven and situated where relevant to my discussion, reflecting the emergent nature of my research.

During my investigation, which on one level, pulls together strands of moving image art practice into one definable field, I have drawn upon relevant exhibitions considering them as publications: their catalogues, journal articles and reviews are again pertinently interwoven into the text, so that the reader encounters them in practice.

In the early part of my research, Judith Tucker and Iain Biggs curated *Lan2d, beyond landscape?* (2005), as a response to the paradoxes of landscapes, which re-affirmed my project's relevance. The accompanying catalogue has an interesting essay by Griselda Pollock, which served to illuminate notions of space, place and contingent site, prompting me to think about them in relation to both geography and moving image installation.

Other essays engaging with broader concerns of moving image installation that have been useful include the catalogue '*Video Spaces: Eight Installations*'. Edited by Barbara London.<sup>69</sup> Although this pre-dates the time frame of my research it was useful in

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<sup>69</sup> London Barbara, (1995) *Video Spaces: Eight Installations*. New York, New York, U.S.A. The Museum of Modern Art.

identifying earlier works sympathetic to my field and their production processes, such as Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), which interests me because of its optically printed photographs as moving image.<sup>70</sup>

A short essay by Mark Beasley in '*Electric Earth, Film and Video from Britain*' that accompanied the exhibition of the same name, alerted me to focus more intently on my subject area. He indicates there is perhaps a *sea change* in thinking, induced by video's democracy, even '*an attempt ...to muddy the waters and occupy previously privileged territories*', suggesting strategies associated with moving image that position moving image installations with some degree of world criticality, questioned through the shifting gaze of the medium.<sup>71</sup>

Other texts that have shown similar pre-occupations to my own in terms of art practice include: '*Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art, A sourcebook of Artists Writings*', edited by Kristine Stiles and Peter Seltz. It contains a series of texts that I have re-visited time and again, not necessarily to draw against but to re-affirm and re-invigorate my research, particularly chapters 5,6 and 7 that cover artists' writings on art and technology, installations, environments and sites, and in chapter 7 process. Also in the *Art and Technology* chapter there is a considered pre-history of the video image (Martha Rosler 1985) which reflects on the difficulties that video based art was experiencing in terms of funding and showing in the 1980's. In the chapter Installations, *Environments and Sites*, there is a short poem by Octavio Paz titled '*Objects and Apparitions-For Joseph Cornell*', published in 1974 (p509); and on reflection whilst writing this literature review, I have come to realise that this

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<sup>70</sup> La Jetée's production process was a strategy that I was interested in investigating for the production process of Hollow (2008). See Practice Documentation. E.H.P.D.06. The text includes a very comprehensive filmography. Bill Viola and Stan Douglas are included, thus mapping an early general history of video and film installation, albeit with an American bias.

<sup>71</sup> Beasley, Mark in an essay *Earache my Eye!* In a catalogue, *Electric Earth, Film and Video from Britain* that accompanied the exhibition *Electric Earth*, at The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, March 2003.p17.

poem has probably prompted the use of my own lyrical way of writing that has come to the fore.<sup>72</sup>

In *'Video Art'* edited by Sylvie Martin, Michael Rush presents a full international survey of video art from the perspective of its practitioners, embracing the moving image from alternative sculpture to multi-screen installations. Exciting chapters emerge such as *'Video and the Conceptual Body'*, (Bruce Nauman's *Mapping the Studio 11* 2001) Rush indicates the beginnings of video art as being difficult to pin down to one or two artists, however an intriguing pre-history emerges in *'A History of Experimental Film and Video'* by A.L. Rees who concurs with Rush about determining the start of any experimental new movements in art practice; his early history *'Origins of the Moving Image' (1780-1880)* makes interesting background reading of a proto-cinema.<sup>73</sup>

Other useful background texts are Jackie Hatfield's superbly edited collection of artists' writings and essays *'Experimental Film and Video'*, with an interesting foreword from Sean Cubitt. This acts as a bridge over the oral culture that surrounded early film and video art in the U.K. reinstating its *'...lost history...'*<sup>74</sup> Another text on earlier video works *'Video Art A Guided Tour'* by Catherine Elwes particularly the chapter on the 1980's and technological advances of the medium. Stuart Comer's edited essays exploit multiple concerns of moving image work and its importance in relation to art's broader history.<sup>75</sup> Thus an attempt is made to plot a linear history through considering specific periods in time. A.L. Rees again contributes early history. A further chapter by Pip Laurenson considers time-based media's vulnerabilities and its relationship to conservation,

<sup>72</sup> Stiles, Kristine, and Seltz, Peter, eds (1996) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*. Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

<sup>73</sup> Martin, Sylvie, (2006) *Video Art*. Koln, London, Los Angeles, Madrid Paris, Tokyo, Koln: Taschen.

<sup>74</sup> Hatfield, Jackie, ed, (2006) *Experimental Film and Video*. Eastleigh. U.K : John Libbey Publishing. p.ix.

<sup>75</sup> Elwes, Catherine, (2005) *Video Art, A Guided Tour*. London, New York: I.B.Tauris.Ltd.

giving an added perspective on considering identity, authorship, and indeed ownership of digital works.<sup>76</sup>

Considering the term installation, Claire Bishop's text '*Installation Art. A Critical History*' (2005) was useful in uncovering problematics of subjectivity, citing works by Janet Cardiff and Robert Smithson as reductionist in their attempts to assimilate the viewer into the work, centring and de-centring in the same breath. She highlights incompatible modalities in her summation as an '*irresolvable antagonism between the two*'. As a result I have been keenly aware of my own status as viewer/witness, partial, fragmented and de-centred. A de-centred subject without closure.<sup>77</sup>

Certain theoretical texts have been inspirational. Irit Rogoff's '*Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*' opened my eyes to seeking other readings of the installations that I have been witness to, in particular her essay *Luggage* that investigates beyond spoken qualities, recognising that '*the unspoken has a parallel presence*'.<sup>78</sup> Equally, Doris von Drathen has led me to think laterally about my subject area through her inspirational text '*Vortex of Silence*', encouraging examination beyond fixed aesthetic categories, meeting artworks as images with emotional impact, an approach which she claims is denied in conventional art criticism. She examines specific works as *intrinsic universes*, thus she respects the art object as '*an entity of otherness*', from which I have taken my research cue.<sup>79</sup>

SOMII practice in the U.K. (for now) continues to be dissipated through concerns of broader landscape-based moving image practice.<sup>80</sup> As such, discussions around SOMII have often evolved

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<sup>76</sup> Elwes, Catherine, (2005) *Video Art, A Guided Tour*. London, New York: I.B.Tauris.Ltd.

<sup>77</sup> Bishop, Clare, (2005) *Installation Art, A Critical History*, London: Tate Publishing.

<sup>78</sup> Rogoff, Irit, 2000, *Terra Infirma*. London, New York: Routledge. pp36-72.

<sup>79</sup> von Drathen, Doris, (2004) *Vortex of Silence*. Milano Editzioni Charta.

<sup>80</sup> I have attempted to address this situation myself through papers given at conferences in the U.K. and overseas, and through papers awaiting publication.

through events such as: *Figuring Landscapes* which premiered at ArtSway in the New Forest in November 2008 and toured this country and Australia through 2009. It took as its point of departure Australian and U.K. landscape based moving image, devised by Catherine Elwes and Steven Ball, serving to investigate how landscapes ‘...are variously represented as place of memory and imagination, as contested territory, as a testing ground for humanity, and as nature under threat.’ Accompanying curatorial talks further opened out this territory.<sup>81</sup>

*The Ghosting Series of Commissions*, shown in 2006, alongside a symposium, initiated by Picture-This, Bristol, and supported by the Arnolfini re-affirmed my interest in historical contingency in the present and the role of the archive in art practice. Interest in site oriented work is supported by concurrent emergence of theorisation of place and it's engagement, enacted through financially supported residencies, through commissioning agencies funding specific projects,<sup>82</sup> and of course many biennales,<sup>83</sup> which can often show a complex and comprehensive range of creative strategies.

More recently issues related to SOMII practice such as the limits of site, fieldwork, place and locality have been offered in ‘*Situation*’, edited by Clare Doherty, serving to re-affirm the positions explored within this research.<sup>84</sup>

Also, the *Emerging Landscapes* conference is due to be held in Westminster, London. June 2010. It will critically re-assess the interface between production and representation, focusing on landscapes changing nature during which my SOMII *Coast, six short*

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.artsandecology.org.uk/magazine/features/dave-berridge--figuring-landscapes>. Retrieved, May2010

<sup>82</sup> Funding bodies that support regional, site interested works include Locus+, Artangel, The Henry Morre Foundation, Arts Council England, Foundation for Sports and the Arts, and the International Centre for Fine Art Research, amongst others.

<sup>83</sup> The problematics of which have been eloquently described in an article by Claire Doherty, “*Location, Location*”, “*The Biennale and the City*” Art Monthly (November 2004).

<sup>84</sup> Doherty, Clare, ed (2009) *Situation*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, and Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press.

*minutes* will be shown as a single screen projection.<sup>85</sup>

Another current (at the time of writing) exhibition, *The Artes Mundi Prize*, (Wales) brings together artists from around the world who stimulate thinking about the human condition and humanity. This year (2010) Ergin Çavuşoğlu was shortlisted for his SOMII *Voyage of No Return*. Another of his works *Fog Walking* (2009) shot on a foggy coastline near Biarritz was reviewed by Mellissa Gronlund in Freize Magazine, (April 2009) and by David Terrien in Art Review, (March 2009). These works are illustrative of the continued debates in art practice around geography, landscape and moving image that are (for now) dissipated across media. Thus exhibitions, debates and reviews are intertwined throughout the following text reflecting the terrain of the enquiry.

Integration of theory and practice has resulted in moving laterally across other disciplines, which will emerge throughout this text alongside the SOMII, thus I will be re-reading contemporary artworks in conjunction with appropriate theoretical texts, as well as travelling selectively through the relatively short history of moving-image installation. In this way, other literature will be revealed as the discussion unfolds and is revealed to the reader - moving metaphorically through time and space to investigate the material evidence gathered together through this research process.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.emerginglandscapes.org.uk>

## Chapter 1

### Towards a Contextual Background

*‘...If art is defined as “universal” and form is routinely favored over content, then artists are encouraged to transcend their immediate locales. But if content is considered the prime component of art, and lived experience is seen as prime material, then regionalism is not a limitation but an advantage...’*<sup>86</sup>

This chapter intends to set the scene for investigations into space, place and site through moving image installation, particularly for discussions on what constitutes the space outside of the image, investigated more fully through witnessing SOMII in the following chapters. In this early chapter however, my aim is to clear ground for the works to come, to offer some pathways for thinking about tracing the elusive spacial qualities of the installations later discussed, and also to begin to frame ideas around representation and cultural and geographic imagination. I will thus be considering texts that attempt to explain other spaces.<sup>87</sup>

The impact of artists’ fascination with outside space is acknowledged, as is landscape’s omnipresence. By using the term ‘site’ within this thesis, my aim is to give distance between the works under discussion and complex notions that have developed around landscape, reflecting ideas that have developed over time: notions from environment to history to politics, which an artist has to pick their way through in the reality of art practice. Whilst this term is

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<sup>86</sup> Lippard L, R, (1998) pp 37.

<sup>87</sup> For example Edward Soja’s conceptual Thirdspace, which I became interested in through relating the time period of its development during the late 1960’s to the development of Sony’s Portapak camera. This in effect meant that Soja apprehended a crisis in spacial thinking past first and second space notions, at the same time that artists were beginning to explore simultaneity of time and space through the lens, whilst contemporaneously the discipline of human geography was also emerging. Space, place and site at this stage were nascent, exciting ideas to be explored by whatever means.

inclusive it also recognises that in recent years there has been much research already done by artists who have investigated notions of site. Artists have over time become site oriented and site responsive. We are also site determined.<sup>88</sup>

In 2006 Mike Crang suggested that, in order to understand a globalised world of transitory experiences, we need to understand points and nodes at which ‘mobilities’<sup>89</sup> are produced, indicating perception of how space relates and interrelates with those who use it and consume it at a local level. For artists working with specific sites, this means working not just with actuality of place in a documentary sense, but also an understanding of how it may be consumed imaginatively.<sup>90</sup>

Contemporaneously, cultural geographer Irit Rogoff explained that there has been a shift in art practice, beyond a simple reading of everything being in relation to everything else, she cited Francis Alys’ moving image work, *Zocalo, May 20 1999* as a work that takes a specific site and ‘...dissolves it beyond the subject’, its concerns becoming greater than the original location, superseding depiction of central subject (site) through practice-methods of duration and framing. This indicates a conceptual space beyond any double articulation, born out of understanding locations: ‘...fluent conjunctions of space and time, space and time... related to one another...’ Thus offering metonymic spacial configurations, made apparent (as geographer Doreen Massey<sup>91</sup> akin to Rogoff suggests)

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<sup>88</sup> Following on and emerging from the early days of Land Artists such as Robert Smithson in the 1970’s.

<sup>89</sup> Cited in Situations papers 3 2006 *Material City*. Professor Tim Cresswell. p5. June 7.2006, Situations was instigated in 2003 by Clare Doherty, whose primary objective was to consider place as a locus of artist activity, Situation’s history and papers archive can be found at

[http://www.situations.org.uk/uploaded\\_pdfs/MaterialCityPaper3.pdf](http://www.situations.org.uk/uploaded_pdfs/MaterialCityPaper3.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Doherty embraces the breadth of site-responsive work positively in Doherty C, (2009).

<sup>91</sup> Massey D, (2002).



to the artist, who can then test art's ability to make visible and audible what remains unseen and unheard.<sup>92</sup>

Site as image-subject manifests with vital shifting boundaries (real and imagined) to be manipulated by the artist. Site is suspended in a state of ongoing displacement - a site of contest, always problematic, and if Rogoff, Crang, and Massey assume a position of understanding site's complexities as fluid conjunctive space/time, that can be conceptually and contiguously negotiated locally (asserting global mutualities beyond the immediate givens), then the way that we, as artists approach SOMII, exceeds replication or even re-invigoration, seeking instead an understanding that goes beyond that which is readily apparent.<sup>93</sup>

In questioning how we look beyond perception and affection to enter a state of becoming for global mutualities to begin to emerge in our work,<sup>94</sup> we are also conceptually lifting the images, sound and contaminated atmosphere of the installation away from regional or local concerns - using the local to transcend the local - thus questions are raised concerning how shared bonds of humanity can be experienced in the space of SOMII as sensation - as lived experience - as being.<sup>95</sup>

Investigating these concerns prompted by artists' negotiations of site, gives rise to complex possibilities encompassing geo-political, geo-

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<sup>92</sup> This paper was originally written in 2006 but I was reminded of it at a Brighton University conference; *Occupations: Negotiations with Constructed Space* 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, where I gave a paper and Irit Rogoff was keynote speaker, re-delivering this paper *The Where of Now*. It can also be found at <http://www.kein.org/node/64> retrieved September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009. The work was shown as part of *Time Zones* 2004 Tate Modern. It captures twelve hours of unedited footage in Mexico City's Central Plaza. It has its historical roots in Chris Marker's *Le Joli Mai* 1962.

<sup>93</sup> See also Kwon M, (2002).

<sup>94</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994) p469.

<sup>95</sup> Artists who stimulate thinking about the human condition and humanity have now been given a platform for their work in the form of The Artes Mundi prize which is now in its fourth year. This year sees Ergin Çavuşoğlu shortlisted for this prestigious award.

social, geo-cultural and geo-philosophical, as well as imaginative relations that occur - with simultaneity - within the overall spacial logic of an installation and within their moving images:

*‘...what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations.’<sup>96</sup>*

In this way, site can be seen as a transitional conceptual space, neither one discipline nor another, one place or another, but rather somewhere(s) different but connected, somewhere(s) in-between, pointing towards Henri Lefebvre’s cumulative trialectics of thirdspace - but with caution and only so far as subjectivism and objectivism allow. Because, although Lefebvre’s vital representational spaces contain all other space, real and imagined simultaneously, it is Edward Soja’s interpretation of thirdspace that resonates in the bounds of this art practice and text. Soja, in stepping theoretically beyond Lefebvre’s triad, claims a position that conceptually proposes a continuity of knowledge beyond the immediately understood; a position radically open to the additional other<sup>97</sup> that resists permanent construction, resonating with the impermanent nature of conceptual site.<sup>98</sup>

Soja’s thirdspace as an other way of understanding and acting may be seen in this context as a mode of critical awareness, thus *‘thirding as othering’* has potential to become an attitude or position that an artist may adopt in exploring even beyond the trialectic interface of spaciality - historicity and sociality. In this way, multiple information

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<sup>96</sup> Massey D, (1993) p278. See also Practice Documentation E.P.D.H.01-03.

<sup>97</sup> Other also resonates with Irit Rogoff’s notions of the forbidden, the hidden, and the unthought.

<sup>98</sup> In the late 1960’s Soja noticed that a general spacial crisis had occurred beyond first and second space definitions - Sony’s Portapak camera co-emerged through which artists’ could explore simultaneity in time/space – positioned alongside the emerging interests of the human geographer.

streams register as part of site's experience.<sup>99</sup> They are spaces in which deconstructed possibilities of postmodernist and modernist perspectives may be creatively re-combined, where real and imagined spaces (first and second space characteristics) are harvested, and their possibilities extended.<sup>100</sup> In art practice terms, this means reaching towards fluid, less defined space in which to investigate and position SOMII with some kind of critical world awareness.<sup>101</sup>

Space becomes visceral beyond the material, determined not through linearity but through simultaneity, not through time and space but through time/space, witnessed as resonant space to be investigated as an intrinsic quality within moving image installation and within its production values. Qualities associated with moving image that have been noted by artist Bill Viola as an '*aura*', whilst Erwin Panofsky wrote earlier of '*intrinsic value*' - both alluding to a sense of other. Viola's aura being sensed as something other outside of the image and Panofsky's intrinsic value as something other interior to film, reflecting their concerned positions as engaged with installation's complex structures, and cinema's internal structures respectively. Whichever attitude, both move towards other space beyond the material – immanent, indicating something exterior to the moving image, prompted through: memory associations, sensual/synthetic geographies, signs and details - both audible and visual - that pull us (the viewer) through the playful hands of the artist into the new space of the installation.<sup>102</sup>

The potent reality of the work is felt in the space outside of the image, as other space, and this is the space of engagement with the viewer - the event of the work - which is examined initially in the following chapter, through looking back in time to works that began to

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<sup>99</sup> See Practice Documentation S.p/s.03.

<sup>100</sup> Soja E.W, (1989).

<sup>101</sup> Visible in the work of Willie Doherty.

<sup>102</sup> Shama S, (1996.)

knowingly decode space, place and site as imaginal topography through which the viewers' position is conceived.

These selective historical works also lay a foundation for the works to come (as with this chapter). They begin to indicate a slip stream of comparisons in which imagery reflects a perception of site as real but through understanding the images' powerful contexts, the artists pursue other readings that privilege imaginary and often internal concepts over documentary space.

In this thesis therefore, site, space and place remain enigmatic, interchangeable even, and are encountered through the diverse SOMII works discussed.<sup>103</sup> Although such ambiguity may be frustrating to the reader, its maintenance seems necessary in order to have a viewpoint commensurate with truly reflecting artists' multifaceted engagement with space, place and site, as conceptual and highly flexible in the event of making the work - as place to make the work in.

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<sup>103</sup> von Drathen D, (2004).

## Chapter 2

### Towards An Historical Background.

Following on from thinking about notions of space, site and place as being intrinsically united through time as transitional and conceptual, and indeed each being implicated in the other, we begin to investigate the affects of installation and the spheres of meaning around them. In order to proceed we need to look back in time, to moving images that have site at their conceptual centre, emanating through the edit/structure/projection to the external affects in situ. Through observing such dislocations of space, place and site, the reader will note that their structures are conceived and remain as open, (reflecting Massey's fluid conjunctive space/time) through which the politics of the works become visible, particularly potent in Warhol's single screen film *Empire*.

In this way, the works selected here draw some time lines in the sands of making that iterate (and re-iterate) artists' intrigue and involvement with space, site and place. In highlighting commonalities and continuities in artistic strategy spreading viral-like through decades of work (sometimes not wholly on view but nevertheless resonant), indication is given of ways of working in a site determined manner. This stems from site's impetus, which will become more apparent as the reader progresses through the thesis. The historical works discussed in this chapter, although not wholly unexpected, do underpin the contemporary works later discussed, and one cannot deny their impact in moving image's relatively short but complex history.<sup>104</sup>

In many ways I fought against their (the works discussed here) inclusion, my doubts arose from my aesthetic preferences. They are

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<sup>104</sup> See Some Notes on Selected Literature p41.

works that move me, and so in writing about them I have found it very difficult to distance myself. Instead I have written from my own modest position, experiencing them as an artist from within practice.

In moving image installation's multifaceted history, Andy Warhol's *Empire* (1965) emerges as a highly visible early point in my pre-occupation with SOMII. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July into July 26<sup>th</sup>, Warhol focused his camera for eight hours and six minutes, from evening until the early hours of the following day. Using three spools of 16mm film and no sound, the focus was the monolithic structure of the Empire State Building. He filmed it from the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Time Life Building.<sup>105</sup>

It is undeniable that the work has an extreme focus. The length of time and lack of edit allows for a very particular durational appreciation of form, however, over and above this, other aesthetic decisions were made as to the speed of the film; Warhol lengthened the running time of the film when projecting the moving image.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 10. Warhol Andy, *Empire*, 1964. b/w silent film.  
Image [www.moma.org/collection](http://www.moma.org/collection) retrieved Jan 09.

He showed it at sixteen frames per second which was eight frames per second slower than its shooting speed. This makes the showing eight hours and six minutes long. This was calculated to slow the effects of light so that its changes would be rendered almost

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<sup>105</sup> Incidentally, this was also from where a camera crew captured the horrific events of 9/11 with startling footage that showed the planes hitting the iconic structures and the ensuing mayhem.

imperceptible to the viewer. This judgment made on behalf of the viewer, (other factors aside) removes it from the genre of documentary into the area of experimental film-making and arguably installation, in that the decision-making processes - involving the production/projection techniques that Warhol employed - were causal to the viewers reception of this durational work.

Showing it in a theatre-like environment, altering the speed of its projection, were decisions taken by Warhol on *how* the reception of the work should take place, thus this work was (and is) definitely installed and not merely shown.<sup>106</sup>

Originally installed in a movie theatre, the seated viewer, was directed through the physical gesture of the seat to watch the static vista, to feel its duration. This circumstance when read in conjunction with the title of the work *Empire* (as opposed to the full title of *Empire State Building*) begins to indicate further conceptual space, space that can be determined through less obvious subjectivities, outside of the image alone.

Claude Nicolet, a historian of the Roman Empire, refers to the transition of Rome from a free republic to an empire. His ontology of 'empire' considered it as '*inventory of the world*' indicating '*spacialisation of a concept that is played out through the evolution of technologies of mobility and surveillance and through a consciousness of boundaries that expand far beyond the self*'. The term 'empire' can thus be understood as space detached from 'the self'.<sup>107</sup>

In conceptually conjoining the image with provocatively loose ontological notions of political space, through the use of the word *Empire*, as opposed to using the building's full title - which would re-

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<sup>106</sup> Speed adjustments have been explored as strategies in my own SOMII see Practice Documentation.E.P.D.06.

<sup>107</sup> Cited in Rogoff I, (2000) p.22.

locate it as 'place' - the conceit of the work falls somewhere between the iconographic image, and suggested political notions within the use of the shortened title. This is an uneasy space, in which the durational moving image manifests as anxiety associated with state power, resonating in the space/time of the work.

Through admitting other ontological considerations, Warhol's *Empire* becomes visible as being conceptually rooted in considerations of space, as a paradoxical play of concepts not readily apparent and perhaps concealed through familiarity or instant recognition.

Power in this set of relations is an immanent force, inseparable from the architecture, image and from the ontology of the title. It exists exterior to the image. It is not hidden in the sense of subterfuge, merely in a sense of understanding, because like Foucault's interpretation of power relations, power is exercised on and through subjects. That is to say that it is hidden whilst being in full view.<sup>108</sup>

Space thus becomes social and psychological through understanding power's spacial vocabulary. A quiet assumption may be that comprehending such space through familiarity with the image, gives us (the viewer) an illusion of understanding. It traps us and we become implicated through our own internal contingencies promoted through the images' duration. (Post 9/11 this work could be read as prophetic).

*Empire* (1964) has been an undeniable influence on many moving image artists: Ergin Çavuşoğlu's *After Empire* (2009) and Francis Alys' *Zocola, May 20* 1999, amongst many other less known works. In this research context, Warhol's *Empire* (1964) is considered a pivotal artwork in early SOMI practice. To include it here is to demonstrate the possibilities of reading certain moving image works outside of the normal optical reading of a single screen film.

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<sup>108</sup> Allen J, (2003) Pp.108-109. See also Practice Documentation. E.P.D. H.05.



Throughout moving-image installation's (comparatively) short history, artists concerned with moving image in relation to site have often used fixed point of view durational camera-work, making strategic decisions in their process that draws from a cross fertilisation of previous histories such as: Structuralist film and the emerging artform of Expanded Cinema of the 1960's<sup>109</sup> - an artform that acknowledged a historical continuity with cinema, but that none-the-less aimed for a *freedom from the rhetoric*.<sup>110</sup> From 1966-1968, the London Filmmakers Co-op was established and during this time '*Duration became a hallmark of British Structuralist Film*'.

An on-line audio archive has been made available due to the popularisation of the Co-op through two London exhibitions, *Live in your Head* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. (2000), and *Shoot Shoot Shoot* at Tate Modern (2002) The archive details an early social history of the London Co-op through which a pre-history emerges from an early collection of interviews, starting at the foundation of the Co-op at Better Books in London W1, (October 13<sup>th</sup> 1966) with Bob Cobbing, Steve Dwoskin, Jeff Keen, David Larcher, Margaret Tait and John Latham. Chris Welsby joined the Co-op at a later date as did other artists who went on to become internationally known, such as Peter Gidal, Malcolm Le Grice, John Smith and William Raban.<sup>111</sup>

This is not a historical account of Structuralist film, however, it would be inconceivable to ignore their embedded legacy in this research.<sup>112</sup> I have cited in the chapters that follow some of the most appropriate works to punctuate this selected and focused view, particularly where I have been witness to their lasting influences on contemporary

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<sup>109</sup> Leighton T, (2008) p40.

<sup>110</sup> Hatfield J, (2006) pp 244-245.

<sup>111</sup> [www.studycollection.co.uk/auralhistory/](http://www.studycollection.co.uk/auralhistory/) see also Rees A.L.A (1999). p77

<sup>112</sup> Catherine Elwes identifies the practice of Structuralist film makers who used available moving image technology in conjunction with natural phenomena or geography of a site, which in these textual circumstances proves to be a binding agent between concepts and strategies, thus challenging the technical process whilst highlighting dual concerns of subject and form that arise from within. Elwes C, (2005) See introduction.

works. Influences that are made apparent beyond the obvious 'fixed frame', 'loop' or 'flicker' of their forbears.<sup>113</sup> In this way, Conceptual and Structural moving image shares practice platforms alongside a tendency to abstraction, and as such any shared strategies and tactics are considered to be contingent within this text.<sup>114</sup>

William Raban and Chris Welsby's *River Yar* (1971-1972) has a strong correlation with a two screen installation (that I viewed as a split screen single projection) of Nikolaj Recke *Tomorrow is Today*, (2006 3'. Colour and sound) shot on the meridian of one hundred and eighty degrees on the Fijian Island of Taveuni.

*'The work shows tomorrow's horizon on the left and yesterdays horizon on the right, capturing two days simultaneously leaving out the today.'*<sup>115</sup>

The parallels to *River Yar* are compelling, with the two screens, fixed point of view horizon, duration (albeit to different degrees), and something less definable: a frisson of activity emerges from within the image structure, (maybe Viola's aura) that resonates with the earlier work, indicating a continuing influence or a shared strategy across time.

Land Art's historical omnipresence is not ignored. Smithson's shadow is ever present, and through the duration of this research I

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<sup>113</sup> For interesting summations of U.K. based Structuralist filmmakers and expanded cinema. Leighton T, (2008). Hatfield J, (2006) and Rees A.L.A, (1999) Also Kossoff A, (2008), articulates notions of space as architectural within the gallery (thus denying immersion through gaps and pauses), taking space at face value says Structuralist film makers have a bearing on work foregrounding it as sculptural. Thus implying structure imposed onto the film work. I do not wholly agree as I believe this negates the very way that technology was consumed into the concept of the work from the outset, and it is this that continues to function from inside of the work connecting them across the years.

<sup>114</sup> Speilmann Y, (2008) Pp166-167.

<sup>115</sup> From a pamphlet that accompanied the screening, *A Stake in the Mud, A Hole in the Reel: Land Art's Expanded Field*. Curated by Latitudes. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

have wrestled with whether to include his works, because of the amount of space and depth required. I eventually decided to include a pivotal piece of Smithson's work engaged with moving-image that has intertwined in its own logic-specific geographic site as a way of introducing a historical/geographical cross-platform for the research.

As early as 1972, Robert Smithson revealed an understanding of site's geographies that became key within his artistic process and evolution of Land Art.<sup>116</sup>

Smithson says:

*'...it's practical, actually to go to wasteland areas whether they're natural or manmade and reconvert those into situations. The Salt Lake piece is near a disused oil drilling operation and the whole part of the lake is completely useless. I'm interested in bringing a landscape with a low profile up, rather than bringing one with a high profile down...'*<sup>117</sup>

Therefore, in the process of locating site, Smithson evaluated and explored the geographical data open to him within the decision making process; opting for an area or site that in his investigations may be '*brought up*'.

Smithson manipulated the material identity of the landscape by moving, piling, removing and re-siting material that: '*reflects the ethos of Minimalism its emphasis on materiality, elemental geometries and siting.*'<sup>118</sup>

Smithson's process used materials including maps, landscapes, film, photography, the spoken word, books and other activities like photographic soil samples, which were more usually associated with the earth sciences. In essence, he adopted visual techniques

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<sup>116</sup> in an interview with Gianni Pettena, in Kastner J, (1999) p45.

<sup>117</sup> Holt N, (1979).

<sup>118</sup> Kastner J, (1998) p45.

associated with humanist geographers, or to put it another way, (and possibly more accurately), his working methods developed contemporaneously with the working methods of the new wave of humanist geographers.

The impulse to see land as outside space as opposed to the more traditional aesthetics of 'landscape' per se, was key to informing Smithson's methodology. The documentation of which eventually found some sort of parity with the final land-work through the moving image.<sup>119</sup>

Geographers at that time were moving away from strictly quantitative numerical data criticised in the early seventies by Yi Fu Tuan as being part of the *'unmovable geographer'*. This indicates the two disciplines of geography and video art as having contemporaneously lain alongside each other since video's inception, and as such they appear to have much in common:<sup>120</sup>

*'...An understanding of the human world by studying people's relations with nature, their geographical behaviour as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place'.<sup>121</sup>*

Similar sensibilities echo visibly within many site-oriented moving image works past and present, such as *Quarry* (2003) by Lucy Gunning, or Steve McQueen's *Caribs Leap/Western Deep* (2002).

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<sup>119</sup> An appreciation of the potential within a humanistic approach to geography was outlined in a number of key texts during the 1970's, in particular *Space and Place: humanistic perspective*. *Progress in Geography*, 6:211-52. And *Humanistic Geography*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 33:32-81. 1976

<sup>120</sup> Quantitative methods in Geographical Analysis had been to the forefront of human geographies since the late 1950's and into the 1960's and as in the same way as using the 'model' to theorize and state the beliefs of the geographers. However Yi Fu Tuan, in an attempt to move away from the quantitative methods described in the early 1970's a phenomenological line of enquiry that examined the essence and meaning, *'uncovered without utilising the presuppositions and methods of science but by examining human interpretation and experience of space and place'*. Cited in Robinson G, M, (1998). See also Tuan Yi-Fu (1971, 1977).

<sup>121</sup> Tuan Yi-Fu, (1976) pp 266-276.

It is the concerns of Smithson's film, *Spiral Jetty. The Film*. Color. 32mins (1970) that I will explore, rather than the 6,783 tonnes of earth that were dislocated, although it is clear that the form of the work must have been influenced by the topography of the site, but how did the topography and geography of the site influence the material nature and narrative of the film? <sup>122</sup>

In 32 minutes of colour film, Smithson re-visits: the site, scale, history, geomorphology, even the cartography of the space through a spoken narrative and a stream of fractured visual narrative, re-living the artistic process of the *Spiral Jetty* now re-claimed as site for the duration of the event of filming. Thus the works differing spaces are revealed.

The stills from Smithson's *Spiral Jetty The Film* clearly illustrate his tendency to 'see' not just the landmass, but also embedded knowledges within site. Experiential movements in camera through the use of close up and far view meant that he re-ordered the site, re-framing it into what he described as the atopic experience or event of site.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 11. Smithson Robert. *Spiral Jetty*.(1970) 32'mins Colour. Film still, retrieved, [www.robertsmithson.com/films/txt/spiral.html](http://www.robertsmithson.com/films/txt/spiral.html) June 09

In many shots the site was implied rather than actually present. Blunt and Wills note that:

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<sup>122</sup> Smithson was assisted by Virginia Dwan, Dwan Gallery and Douglas Christmas Director of Ace Gallery.

*'Ideas about vision, visual representation and 'the gaze' are inherently spacial, usually implying a distance between the observer and what is being observed and often involving different strategies of bounding or enframing what is seen...'*<sup>123</sup>

Smithson's strategy can be witnessed as multi-layered, multi-material, multi-media: one that didn't propose to solve anything but provoked a new barrage of questions, even the frame of the film became another spacial enquiry. In this way, the specific site became a new subject, separate - yet part of the whole project. Thus revealing an interior tension, which came from the diverse ways with which he materially perceived the site through the lens, causally negating non-site, whilst opening it up to further questions and observations, in a typically Smithsonian manner:

*'This site was a rotary that enclosed itself in an immense roundness. From that gyrating space emerged the possibility of the Spiral Jetty. No ideas, no concepts, no systems, no structures, no abstractions could hold themselves together in the actuality of that evidence. My dialectics of site and nonsite whirled into an indeterminate state, where solid and liquid lost themselves in each other...No sense wondering about classifications and categories there were none.'*<sup>124</sup>

The sense of portrait that the film envisages, may or may not be truthful; there is a fictive element to this quasi-documentary. Smithson's voice-over describes the evolution of *The Spiral Jetty* as "earthwork", the authentic voice asks us (the viewer) to believe. Smithson however encourages a reading of film that acknowledges the contingency of all representational mediums as things in themselves - things that have a formal relationship.

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<sup>123</sup> cited in Kindon S, (2003).

<sup>124</sup> Holt N, (1979) pp109-113.

In a published article '*A Cinematic Atopia*' he refers to the fact that site within film cannot be trusted and shouldn't be located - but seen for the thing that it is in itself (its own values). He indicates that the length of time spent viewing the site through the lens distances the maker from site's reality, thus the fact of the film can become distorted through familiarity.<sup>125</sup> This intimates that multiple views and multiple streams of information engage with the space of his film - as a film - working on all cinematic levels, not merely as documentation of his land art.<sup>126</sup> Through Smithson's voice-over, doubling of site comes sharply into view. The very impact of site's metonymic layers of time and information he considered exterior to language, systems, and classifications, through which the viewer is prompted to re-think their relationship to the spaces that they inhabit, explore and simply live in.

This chapter represents a starting point in beginning to draw threads across time and space of artists' engagement with outside space. Smithson's relationship with the site of his Land Art as image/subject, places a marker in film history, of ways in which artists consider space as contiguously both ambiguous and potent within the construction of the moving images. Whilst Warhol exceeds the image, negotiating space outside of the frame in terms of durational time and historical and political concepts, Smithson concentrated on site's multiple information layers to construct the imagery. Both these early works assert the artists' point of view that technology alone would not produce a radical change in perception, but that technology could be used to push at the more unequivocal and possibly discordant/dissonant relations of site, and to admit the viewers' perspective to the very concept and construct of the work.

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<sup>125</sup> Which links back to Warhol's *Empire*.

<sup>126</sup> Holt N, (1979) p 112.

Apparent in these early works - in the time line of moving image history – are these small revolutions in thinking, which have influenced us as artists in the intervening years. They demonstrate that the relationship that we have as viewer to the projected images is profoundly interactive, formed in history, not in a way that plays at being interactive – but in a provocatively physical way that asserts both mind and body. Thus following Smithson's and Warhol's leads, SOMII are opened up to other readings, to interrogate other spaces provoked by sense and feeling. In the following chapters we will see how other artists have contended with space, site and place, actual and imagined; carrying the legacies put in place by Warhol, Smithson and other early advocates of moving image as artistic medium, such as Naim June Paik, Bill Viola and many more whose presences are felt rather than articulated through the following pages.

I have positioned further selective historical works to be iterated alongside the contemporary ones, this stems from a structural decision to support the more exploratory accounts of the contemporary works on view. In this way the activities of the artists are seen to be united across time, opening out and making visible ways of making and installing that range from intimate proximate use of site (as in the next chapter) through to multi-layered spaces of engagement within the space of the gallery.

This short and partial history - compressed even - positions itself between the lines of the following chapters. It adds to, indicates towards and slides back and forth between concepts and notions, its purpose to bring historical/conceptual/spacial ideas - indeed what could be termed imaginal topography - to the fore. It also seeps in-between, re-affirming not only SOMII's longevity but also its vitality in the space of the contemporary gallery.



## Chapter 3

**Propinquity and the projected image: some ways in which artists negotiate familiarity with site through moving-image installation.**

*'... Attention to implicit conceptualisations of space is crucial also in practices of resistance and of building alternatives.'*<sup>127</sup>

*'the decomposition of narrative films, once subversive is now (considered) normal.'*<sup>128</sup>

### Introduction

Here, I begin in earnest my examination of a type of installation based art practice that has site, space and place at its conceptual centre. Conjunctive notions of proximity and specific geographic site inhabit this chapter; works that use familiarity with place as a strategy of arts spatial production. The focus of the analysis is thus on artists' relationships to local as a condition of site's specificity and its compound relation to feeling and thought.<sup>129</sup>

This is investigated alongside acknowledgement of moving image projection's continuing dialogue with broken narrative, and fragmented shards of visual information (as we have already witnessed in Smithson's earlier *Spiral Jetty*). The text indicates ways in which artists investigate and use specific sites in their moving image art practice. Works thus begin to be collated through making conceptual connections visible, through engaging with installation methods, images, and visual narrative alongside the sense and feeling of the work in-situ.

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<sup>127</sup> Massey D, (2005) p99.

<sup>128</sup> Burgin V, (2004) p.8. See also Aitkin D, and Daniel, N, (2006).

<sup>129</sup> Tuan Yi-fu, (1977).

These particular works seemingly transgress the normal proximate boundaries implicit in moving image installation art practice, overstepping formal properties. They are freed of film's sutured narrative structure, thus conceptual nearness in space, time and relationship can be seen here to pour normative balm on the uneven spaces of projected installation, encouraged further by a vivacity of conjunctive images within a multi-screen environment. Thus revealing at once a combination of technology and situated knowledge used by artists as a strategy to re-engage with place through and at the site of installation.<sup>130</sup>

The locations of these works are at the other end of the spacial spectrum to Marc Auge's ideas on 'non-place' as overwhelming sites of information overload, of speed and excess. These sites are specific to the artists on a fundamental and personal level. They utter specificity, reflecting a stream of imminence and memory as if caught in time, and because of this lean towards eluding any conclusive formal resolution.<sup>131</sup>

Robert Smithson's 'Non-sites' according to Nick Kaye, reflected a geographic mental drift and artistic ambivalence. Non-Sites, he claimed, direct the viewer to specific '*points of collection... but without a map... the site is incognito, the location is held in suspense...*'<sup>132</sup>

The locations in this chapter, I will argue, are also held in suspense, not out of overt ambivalence or anonymity, but out of familiarity used as a point of departure. Like Smithson, there is evidence of geographical drift within the *imageness* of the work.<sup>133</sup> Uncertainty or ambivalence however can only be presumed. It will be seen that when these moving image works are installed they become a

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<sup>130</sup> Sutured is a term borrowed from Adam Kossoff's thesis, *On Terra Firma. Space, Place and The Moving Image*. (2007), R.A. used here to express a 'knowing edit', as opposed to an organically emergent edit.

<sup>131</sup> Auge M, (1995) See also Kaye, N, 2000 pp95-97.

<sup>132</sup> Kaye N, (2000) pp95-97.

<sup>133</sup> for explanation of the term Imageness, see appendix i glossary of terms.

synthesis of original place and new site: they are spaces out of which contingencies permeate the gallery.

The text will further discuss how artists provoke viewers into investing in new site, whilst simultaneously engaging with the specificities of the original site reflected in the mirror of her/his own situated knowledge, and thus reflecting Smithson's locational suspension.<sup>134</sup>

Site now is not static, but a molten subject, and in common with Non-Site is '*always in the process of appearance or disappearance available only in a dialectical move which... (it) ...prompts and to which it always returns*'.<sup>135</sup>

Specific sites through the tool of familiarity are the 'ness' to the artist: the 'Scottishness' to Margaret Tate, the 'Almondness' to Darren Almond, the 'Landyness' to Michael Landy.<sup>136</sup>

In encountering the artworks in this chapter, the viewer is involved in an intimate engagement with the very idea of local seen for example in the two large-scale installations by Michael Landy<sup>137</sup> and Darren Almond,<sup>138</sup> and witnessed in the modest film work of Margaret Tait.<sup>139</sup>

Therefore, in this chapter, the term, 'geographic site' describes not just the installation site but also the imaginative site, ascribing a phenomenological experience akin to Merleau-Ponty's '*lived experience*' to both the way of filming and to the nature of installation, as a state of familiarity.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Prompted by Kayes' unravelling of site specificities in Kaye N, (2000) p54.

<sup>135</sup> Kaye N, (2000) pp95-97.

<sup>136</sup> The notion of 'ness' is influenced by Bourriaud N, (2009) p73.

<sup>137</sup> *Semi Detached* (2004). Tate Britain. See page 64.

<sup>138</sup> *If I had you* (2003). Tate Modern. See page 67.

<sup>139</sup> *Portrait of Ga.* (1954).

<sup>140</sup> Merleau-Ponty M, in a lecture *Exploring the World of Perception: Space*, (1948) suggested that only by interrupting the expected view of perspectival processes can an artist ( he refers to the painter) evoke the feeling of being and dwelling in the landscape. Merleau-Ponty, M, ( 2002) pp49-56.

'Propinquity' as a term acknowledges local and localness: it is helpful to define 'localness' as a point or node in space and time through which information's fluid networks cross over.<sup>141</sup> Thus localness may be read as a complex, shifting nexus of information/relationships, fabricated from the geographic: the regional, the personal, the emotive and the imaginative. Citing Arturo Escobar, Doreen Massey suggests that notions of local places (produced through globalisation) always have a counterpoint:

*'...the global is associated with space, capital, history and agency while the local, conversely, is linked to place, labor, and tradition - as well as with woman, minorities, the poor and, one might add local cultures.'*<sup>142</sup> which may be seen as crucial points of difference between the works under the research spotlight, working as virtual indicators of how and why a moving image is produced in this type of site.

She concludes that place is figured as a victim of globalisation. It is 'local' construction of the global. Thus Global economy is omnipresent in the small considerations of localness mediated by the ordinary, and seen in many artist's works such as the early photographic work of Gillian Waring and more latterly in moving image works such as Steve McQueen's *Caribs' Leap/Western Deep* shown in 2002 at the Lumiere, St Martins Lane. London.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> A concept cited by Mike Crang in Situations papers No.3. June 7.2006. *Material City*. Professor Tim Cresswell. p5.

<sup>142</sup> Massey D, (2005) p101.

<sup>143</sup> Waring questions the psychological gap between being and appearance, bordering on an examination of the mundane, she often (in her early work) used locations such as a shopping centre or a park in which to position her subject, such as her early 1992 photographic piece, "*Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that say what someone else wants you to say.*" Waring orchestrated members of the public to write messages on large cards. The intimacy of the combination of words and portrait was both startling and moving; one such photograph showed a clean looking young man in a suit whose sign reads simply, "I'm Desperate." The human subject in this work takes visual and conceptual priority to the location, although it could be argued that the localness of the early situations enabled a close reading of the subjects within them to be made; in locating her subjects she used 'ordinariness' or the mundane as a backdrop to their intimate thoughts, thus casting the written thought on the white board as the

*Western Deep* is a social and political study of South African miners in the Tautona mines near Johannesburg in South Africa, which plunges visually into the darkness of the mine, and shown in conjunction with McQueen's *Caribs' Leap*; a personal exploration of his late grandmothers home of Grenada, focusing on a familiar historical story on the Island at Sauteurs, where a mass suicide took place during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

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[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 12. McQueen Steve. *Caribs' Leap*, (2002). Images retrieved May 09 from [http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/caribs\\_leap\\_western\\_deep/caribs\\_leap\\_stills/falling\\_man](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/caribs_leap_western_deep/caribs_leap_stills/falling_man)

Figure 13. McQueen Steve. *Western Deep*. Single screen projection. (2002) Image retrieved 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 [http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/caribs\\_leap\\_western\\_deep/western\\_deep\\_stills/face\\_with\\_head\\_torch](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/caribs_leap_western_deep/western_deep_stills/face_with_head_torch)

In these two films, McQueen specifically engages in local concerns made visible in the intimate space of the installation, as Searle indicates:

*'...the intermittent light, the camera burrowing into near-dark and illuminating glimpses of things that are very close, seen only partially, is itself close to what the workers in this mine experience every minute of every shift.'*<sup>144</sup>

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protagonist of the work. "I'm desperate" is central to the concept of the work, the inscriber of the words and the place in which he is located are secondary and as such frame and encode the plea.

<sup>144</sup> Searle, A, The Guardian Newspaper, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2002. These films were shown as two separate screens at The Lumiere Cinema, London.

The viewer, not held at cinematic distance, experiences at close quarters intimate details within the image plane, however the field of experience that McQueen creates exists as much outside of the image frame as it does internally.

*'McQueen's interest in the fundamentals of the act of filming has always included its staging, a pre-occupation with how and where his films are shown and with the place of the audience, psychologically as much as physically.'*<sup>145</sup>

In this combined installation of the work, reflected global shared concerns are pricked at through the conscience of the situated viewer, *'This, for McQueen, is film's space, a place as much as it is a projected narrative.'* Which is also interesting in relation to his more recent award winning moving image work, *'Hunger that explores the system of prison as it is'* (2008) that embodies experiences of prisoners almost to the point of exclaiming a meta-place.<sup>146</sup>

Contextual global considerations can be seen in terms of gender within Margaret Tait's film, reflecting the political situation of rural women in the Fifties. Moving forwards into contemporary works, seen in the politically ideological subtext that underscores the plight of injured ex-industrial workers in Michael Landy's SOMII. (See later in this chapter).

Local in these terms can be witnessed - as Massey indicates- as marginal products of the political. However, I would argue that this localness has conceptual and imaginative parity with the personal experienced by the artist, expressed through focusing on intricacies of experiencing localness in relation to the human protagonists within the works. Made all the more powerful by their careful, almost diffident nature. This perhaps offers an antidote to examining the power-geometrics of local described by Massey. The artists, in seeking to participate in an imaginative experience of familiar space

<sup>145</sup> Searle A, The Guardian Newspaper (October 8<sup>th</sup> 2002).

<sup>146</sup> Searle A, The Guardian Newspaper (October 8<sup>th</sup> 2002).

and place, perhaps negate or block off any extreme political engagement.<sup>147</sup>

By their bodily absence, the artists make their own position visible, potentially implying a counter-political gesture. In doing so, to borrow Nicolas Bourriard's term, they engineer a *radicant space* formed out of multi-perspectivism<sup>148</sup> thus enacting *The Tropic* of the familiar as a contested terrain.<sup>149</sup>

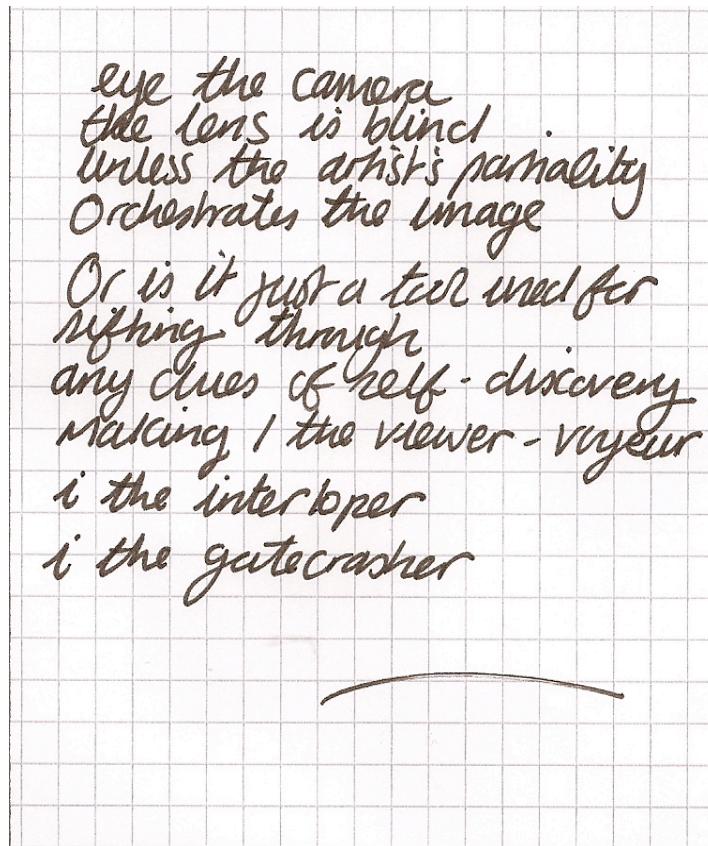


Figure14. From notebooks, Michele Whiting, (2007)

<sup>147</sup> Massey D, (2005).

<sup>148</sup> Which relates back to Merleau-Ponty's 'lived experience' encompassing multi-perspective within its layers. Merleau-Ponty M, (2002) pp49-56.

<sup>149</sup> Bourriard N, (2009) p75.

## Semi-Detached

In 2004, Michael Landy combined the fabric of his childhood with sound and moving image to make a life-scale installation of a semi-detached house, that, according to the publicity material invoked ‘... *questions of value and usefulness, employment and purpose,*’ thus touching on Massey’s definition of local.<sup>150</sup>

*Semi-Detached* has at its heart dual considerations of Michael Landy’s relationship with his father, and the local environment in which he grew up. The Duveen Gallery (Tate Britain) installed an exact replica of Michael Landy’s parents’ home at 62 Kingswood Rd, Ilford, Essex. Landy’s installation increases in poignancy past notions of monolithic structures, as the viewer gains knowledge of the family’s history. Through an accompanying leaflet we learn that his father who can be heard whistling in the sound track, was catastrophically hurt in an industrial accident thirty years previously.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 15. Landy Michael, *Semi-Detached* (2004) Installation/sculpture. [www.tate.org.uk/Britain/exhibitions/landy](http://www.tate.org.uk/Britain/exhibitions/landy) Image retrieved Jan09

<sup>150</sup> Curators notes from exhibition pamphlet. Tate Britain, 2004.



The house bisected into front and back halves, is installed with some distance between each section, showing, via back projections, two large scale video screens. Moving-image using a durational steady-cam long shot is seen on the first screen. Titled *Shelflife*, it amounts to a steady image-flow of diagrams and pictograms taken from his father's collection of 1950's DIY manuals.

The second screen shows perhaps more illusively, the 'texture' of Landy's paternal relationship, via a year long documentary portrait which takes a mundane, monotonous view of his father's daily routine, involving prescription drugs, time and circumstance. '*Four Walls*' depicts life incarcerated in the dusty semi. A predicament shared by many marginalised people across the country, and it is here that Massey's notion of globalised local economy emerges as a universal concern.

The lens of the camera acts as an all seeing eye to the injustice of illness, depressive isolation and fortitude. The lens moves steadily across these scenes, recording without judgment, pity or nostalgia. Time is audible in the ticking clock and the monotone hum of electrical appliances. Sounds that through direction act to repel the viewer back outside of the image to move across the space.

'*Semi-detached*', is a major site-specific installation of double articulation – anti-monument and incredible detail, more illusively perhaps it illustrates through the moving images processual strategy, Landy's own possible search for some interior unity.<sup>151</sup>

It is in witnessing such psychological interiority that the work offers an insight into combined outer and inner space, space into which site has collapsed as lived experience.

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<sup>151</sup> Michael Landy is well known for invoking questions of consumerism, identity and employment indicated in an earlier performance based work *Breakdown* 2001. With this work Landy made a detailed inventory of all that he possessed and set about systematically dismantling and destroying them all over a two week period, effectively questioning how identity is constructed through the choice and consumption of consumer commodities.

Image and artefact are intertwined, the object-image becomes one. The viewer dwells in-between, existing in a visceral energy field spun between the dissected - now anti-monument - house.

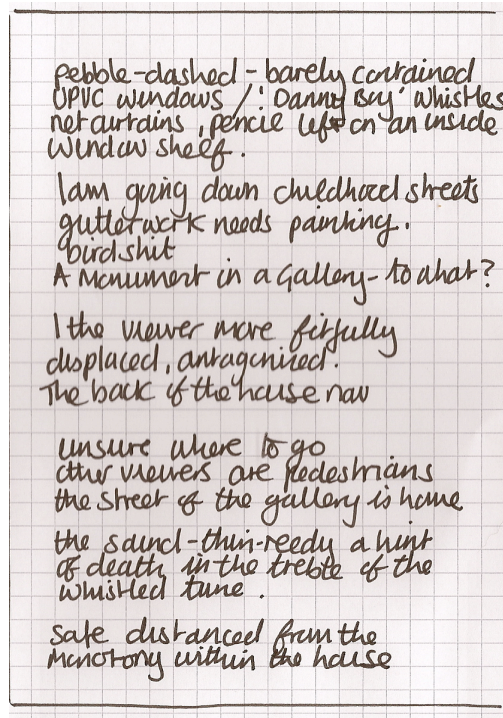


Figure 16. From notebooks, Michele Whiting. (2004)

It is here that environmental participation<sup>152</sup> can be experienced, not as problematic 'cultish re-enchantments' associated with large-scale works, but through *suturing devices* realised by Landy. The complex uniting of image/objects in this SOMII metamorphoses into shared (universal) emotional space.<sup>153</sup>

Thus the artist plays with the viewer's orientation, who is metaphorically inside and outside both house and relationship. The push and pull that ensues, underscored by the title of the work *Semi-Detached*, alludes not only to the house type, but also to Michael

<sup>152</sup> Alliez, E, (2009) p23.

<sup>153</sup> Leighton re-uses this phrase of Hal Fosters in describing immersive large scale installations of the 80's and 90's. Leighton, T, (2008) p34 also see Leighton, T, (2008) pp34-35 and Rogoff, I, (2006).

Landy's father's relationship with the outside world, and the emotional space within their relationship; a notion that given the opaque nature of experiential clues, viewers may only guess at.

Localness in this reading, is reinvigorated intimately through the duality of sculptural detail and scale, gleaned from familiarity (with site) from without *and* from within the moving image. By dwelling within the 'web' of the house, the viewer not just discerns, but is invested - experiencing a shift in temporal reality through which s/he is compelled to become witness to the plain and painful proximity of the experience of *being* Michael Landy and all that he observes. In this way perhaps the house becomes the metaphorical body of his father.

### **If I Had You.**

A year earlier, Darren Almond's four-screen installation, *If I Had You*, also spoke of childhood relationships and family, focusing on memories of his widowed grandmother.<sup>154</sup> Darren Almond's grandmother is seen lost in visual memories as they re-visit the site of her honeymoon in '*If I Had You*' (Turner Prize nominee, 2005. Tate Britain).

The work consists of four individual projections on screens of varying sizes, which intercept the gallery space at seemingly random points. It was filmed in a specific location that holds significance for the artist's family, made poignant through the moving image strategies. The text that accompanies the exhibition details a romantic interlude spent at the site during the grandmother's honeymoon.

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<sup>154</sup> His work is often motivated by his interest in geographical locations, a sulphur mine in Indonesia titles '*In Schata*' for example, or a series of photographs of full moons taken from different locations. He also explored relationships close to him, also making a video portrait of his father, who similarly to Landy's father, was injured whilst working.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure17. Almond Darren. *If I Had You* (2003) Installation.  
www.tate.org.uk/ifihadyou. Image retrieved Jan09

Once again, this installation draws on varied visual codes that make up 'site', and like the physical and emotional experienced in Landy's *Semi Detached*, shares strategies that assert universal feelings (affects).

In one screen, illuminated sails of Blackpool's windmill slowly turn, whilst a couple are seen dancing in a ballroom on a separate screen, watched wistfully by an elderly lady, who appears on a further individual screen. The fourth screen shows water spouting from a classically shaped stone fountain, set in a techni-coloured garden. A cyclical rhythmic pattern and motif emerges showing: turning windmill sails, the couple slowly circling around the dance-floor, the fountain shape and the open eyes of the grandmother, thus uniting the images of roundness into a single plane of virtual materiality.<sup>155</sup>

A state of imageness begins to exist between images - a state through which the viewer moves - a space not to be mistaken for synthetic geography, or some metaphorical existence that emphasises the pattern of life experienced as an inevitability of death, but, as Eric Alliez describes a space or state of *a politics of experimentation*, in which conjunctions between *things* begin to form beyond the metaphor.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Deleuze G, and Guatarri F. (1994) p466.

<sup>156</sup> Alliez E, (2009) p24.

The viewer, who moves through the installation space - instead of having any definitive agency of the work to fall back on - participates through being in, displacing themselves through events within the separated images, which through time spent, moves them towards an interior imaginary discursiveness.<sup>157</sup> In this enquiring state, the visuals are exposed, opened out even. It is the older woman's countenance: her expression, her eyes, which may be revealed as Barthe's *punctum*, through the ocularly unified set of moving images presented. They begin to tell a story, beyond the images across the screens.<sup>158</sup>

The sound track is ambient to the location, playing '*The Aphex Twin*' Richard James's electronic music. This repeated musical phrase merges with the footfall of the dancers, locating the spaciality of the ballroom in the viewer's mind, audibly conjoining the heterogeneous but fused images with the viewer's own footfall. Unsettling and discordant questions arise of their fusion, of their '*relation, non-relation, or relation of non-relation.*' This happens because of the position of the installation in the lower half of the gallery, which in conjunction with the music and dancer's feet encourages viewers to become aware of their own dance, their own participation.<sup>159</sup>

Both *Semi Detached* and *If I had You* are inscribed with personal experiences, and as such they remain incomplete, acting instead as a reflective surface. Through disjunctions, the works require the viewer to sense the relationship that the human protagonists within the moving images may have with the artists.

These SOMI act as contemporary mise-en-scenes that rely on signs pertinent to British culture, interpreted through fusion-mechanics of

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<sup>157</sup> Akin to the experience of viewing *Semi Detached*, (2004) See also *Percipere*, Practice Documentation. E.P.D.18.

<sup>158</sup> Alliez E, (2009) p24.

<sup>159</sup> Alliez E, (2009) p24 See also Practice Documentation. W.M.I.01. *Hollow* installed.2008.

sculpture/architecture, which transform the installations into new places within the gallery. They also work as displacement or rupture in the contextual continuum of what is expected: we don't expect to encounter a 'semi' in the Duveen gallery, equally we don't expect to be drawn to a pair of desolate eyes looking back at us in *If I had You*. These extraordinary and rupturing effects are negotiated internally and externally to the images, provoking feelings in the viewer as Paul Ricoeur describes:

*'Feeling is...without doubt intentional: it is a feeling of 'something'-the loveable, the hateful...But it is a very strange intentionality which on the one hand designates qualities felt on things, on persons, on the world, and on the other hand manifests and reveals the way in which the self is inwardly affected.'*<sup>160</sup>

Akin to *Semi Detached*, *If I Had You* relies on shared feeling of family, understood beyond that of specialising cultural narratives. But this reading cannot be contained as one thought, it mutates beyond what is sayable and argues instead for feelings provoked by familiar, fractured, shifting signs.

*'The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing in itself, the present thing, "thing" here standing equally for meaning or referent. The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We give or take signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence.'*<sup>161</sup>

Compound space experienced outside of the image, becomes a present relation between feeling and thought *experienced near the two ends of an experiential continuum*. Mutated through shifting

<sup>160</sup> Cited in Tuan Yi-Fu, (1977) p9.

<sup>161</sup> Dean T, and Millar J, (2005) p118.

signs that enable a reading of other space through which the works mysteries may be revealed.<sup>162</sup>

In editing and compressing visual information which provokes notions of 'mundane' i.e. Landy's interiors or Almond's ballroom floor, the signifier becomes a pure device enabling viewers to become acutely aware of the implicit structures of (their own) everyday existence.

It is because of the artists' agency in reducing or compressing ordinary human existence that I would argue against any criticism of theatricality. Instead, the ambulant viewer faced with an artist's seeming truth, experiences the work bodily.

The projected image's slickness may not just obfuscate its processes, but also digital medium's ability to mimic how memories are constructed and re-constructed, edited and reworked. Thus through moving across screens, the viewer brushes against the artist's clear understanding and manipulation of site as a sentient node in which memory and feelings cross. Re-presented as images, that, through production and its knowing processes are used to ignite feelings of similitude or even déjà-vu, through the poignant details of life.

### **Portrait of Ga.**

Despite emphasising complexity, SOMII's that engage with propinquity do not necessarily need to rely on such intricacies of installation, and sometimes offer themselves more modestly within a single screen. An earlier British moving image work that pre-dates *Outer and Inner Space* and pre-dates *Empire*, that is less historically visible but none the less important, expresses connectivity between

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<sup>162</sup> Tuan Yi- Fu, 1997.

space, time and relationship with clarity within its single frame. Focusing with parity on specific geographic site and the artist's mother, whose 'thematics' inform the works construction.

Margaret Tait made *Portrait of Ga* in 1952, her influence on experimental filmmakers in the U.K. according to curator Catherine Elwes, has been profound, and so it is to this piece of work that I turn the focus of this text.<sup>163</sup>

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 18. Tait Margaret, *A Portrait of Ga* (1952) 4mins Colour 16mm Film.  
Image from [www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/margaret\\_tait/a\\_portrait\\_of\\_ga.html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/margaret_tait/a_portrait_of_ga.html)

The film is a portrait of Margaret Tait's mother captured in her homeland of the Orkneys. Shown in recent years as part of 'A Century of Artists' Film in Britain' Tate Modern 2004, and more recently in an exhibition 'Figuring Landscapes' at Artsway, Sway, Hampshire 2008.<sup>164</sup>

It has historically been viewed both as theatre screening and more latterly within the gallery context, therefore lending some weight to the argument for its inclusion.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> There is some discrepancies with the date of production of this film, The Tate claim it to be 1955, I however will take the date identified by Professor Catherine Elwes as being 1952, which was used in a pamphlet that accompanied 'Figuring Landscapes' 25<sup>th</sup> November-30<sup>th</sup> November 2008, an exhibition curated by Catherine Elwes.

<sup>164</sup> made on a return trip when she was a student at the Film School in Rome.

<sup>165</sup> Tait also showed her work very particularly in the space of the studio to invited guests, who sitting on a red cushioned chair, watched the work projected onto a small painted rectangle on her studio wall.



It is in many respects a visionary film influencing experimental film and video makers, not least because of Margaret Tait's interest and position in the London Co-op in the 1970's.

*Portrait of Ga* is often described as an intimate portrait. In her obituary in *The Independent* on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1999, Murray Grigor described the work as '*a moving visual dialogue between daughter and mother*' suggesting visual intimacy. It is in effect all of these things and yet it is also understood as landscape, hence its inclusion in two very different exhibitions. The 2004 screenings at the Tate showed it in a category named *Portraits*, and (as mentioned previously) it was later included in the exhibition *Figuring Landscapes* curated by Catherine Elwes.

However it is perceived, *A Portrait of Ga* is a film of sequences, born out of the 1950's Italian Neo-Realists. It is not in Tait's view a documentary or a diary film, yet the voiceover allows for the intimate inclusion of the viewer into a relationship encouraged through the camera lens.<sup>166</sup>

The episodic sequences used in the film show both an intimate view of Tait's mother and an intimate view of a land that she knew and loved. In her own words she says of her films that:

'...they are born out of sheer wonder and astonishment at how much can be seen in any place that you choose... if you really look...' <sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> The Italian Neo-Realists developed a film thematic that explored the marginalised, poor working class conditions of post-war Italy, emphasising the emotional over the abstract. Developed in the late 1940's and maturing in the early 1950's. Including early works of Federico Fellini and Roberto Rossellini. This was prompted by the cover notes of Margaret Tait selected films 1952-1976.

<sup>167</sup> [www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/986](http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/986)

[Images redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 19/20. Tait Margaret, *A Portrait of Ga*. (1952) 4mins Colour 16mm Film.  
Image source as above. Retrieved Jan 09.

In viewing '*Portrait of Ga*' it is possible to perceive parity between land and life. Between love of land and maternal love, viewed through the lens with equality and simplicity. It is an illustration of intimate love in the portrait/landscape or landscape/portrait. The image's sequences reflect a visit. They are edited as if they were independent scenes casually appropriated. There is no overt logic to their assembly and as such they appear as though *found*, a critical tableau based on an artist's situated knowledge reflecting Italian Neo-Realism's early influence.<sup>168</sup>

Miwon Kwon suggests that an artist's reading of site is not about extracting a defined meaning of place, but more about fluid interpretation. Something that inhabits a mid-position, not tied down to restricted viewpoints.<sup>169</sup> Thus, in *Portrait of Ga* the site becomes a virtual coffer of fluid yet modest embedded emotions. Images of land and mother are closely bound becoming inseparable through image/time.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> This was a similar strategy to the one I used in *Hollow*, in which I used performance artists documentation as found material, see chapter 6. And Practice Documentation.E.H.P.D.1- 8.

<sup>169</sup> Kwon M, (2004).

<sup>170</sup> de Oliveira N, and Oxley N, and Petry M, p3.

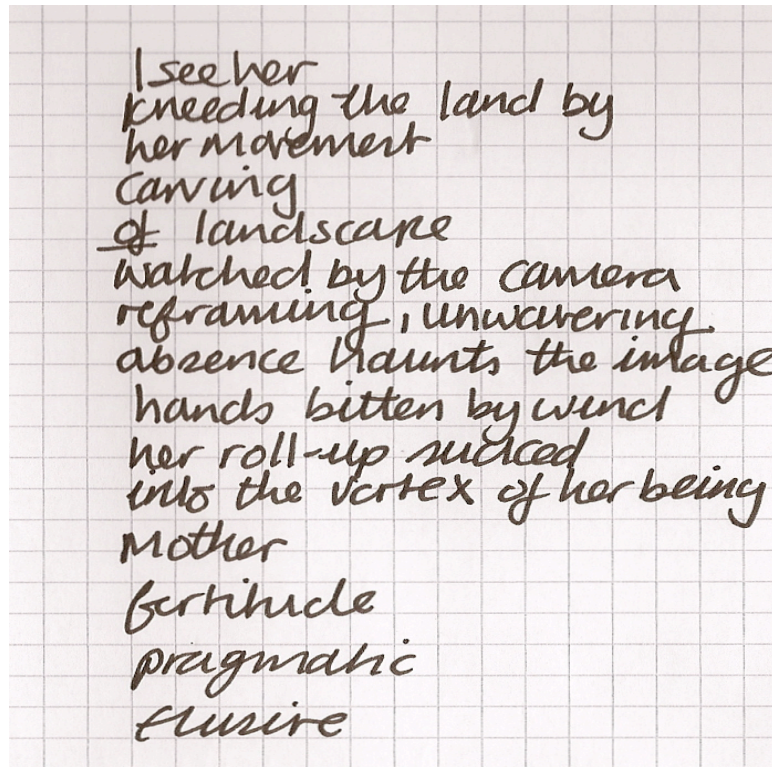


Figure 21. From notebooks, Michele Whiting (2008)

Thus site becomes pitted with meanings encouraging the image to assert 'other' space. This place is not a closed container of things, but a conceptual space that generously allows for mobility of experience, encouraging resistance towards traditional understandings of identity and place.

*'Perhaps more than ever before, we are becoming consciously aware of ourselves as intrinsically spacial beings, continuously engaged in the collective activity of producing spaces and places, territories and regions, environments and habitats. This process of producing spaciality or 'making geographies' begins with the body, with the construction and performance of the self, the human subject, as a distinctively spacial entity involved in a complex relation with our surroundings...'*<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Soja E,W, (2000) Cited in the introduction to *Nonsite to Celebration Park, Essays on Art and the Politics of Space*. 2007. Eds Edward Whittaker and Alex

Edward Soja, (above) might have been describing the construction of sequences within the film as it moves from close to far shot. In which, Tait uses the body of her mother to inscribe specific landscape of the Orkneys. Physically describing topological features of site by: walking, driving a tractor, working and so on. Thus instating corporeality into the film along with an internal rhythm. Producing space not only internally in the edit but literally in the subject matter, elevating it above merely being viewed as everyday, whilst remaining firmly rooted in pragmatic reality.

Stylistic values inherent within the work owe much to Tait's early Italian days: the simplicity of the film production, non-linear narrative, and ambient bird song are combined with a non-political agenda, and chiaroscuro, all in keeping with Neo-Realist film characteristics of that era. Filmed post-war, when women were experiencing being re-domesticised, the sequences obliquely reference independence, fortitude and resilience. Tait's belief that through looking intensely enough the object/subject would reveal its very nature resonates in the unequivocal gaze of her lens, focused with parity on her mother conjoined with landscape.<sup>172</sup>

The relationship between traditional chiaroscuro and the close-ups of the mother figure deserves some further consideration. Ideologically the Italian Neo-Realists valued the lives and works of ordinary people: emphasising democracy through compassionate mises en scene that reflected their blend of Christian and Marxist thinking. The bold contrasts of darks and lights assert emotions, reflected in Tait's filmed situations of her mother at work on the land without idealising or abstracting the subject.

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Landrum. Bath Spa University. A publication following the Conference Critical Topology of Landscape: Visual Art and the Politics of Space. Sion Hill Campus. 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

<sup>172</sup>Influenced by notes from the D.V.D Margaret Tait. Selected Films 1952-1976, Published by Lux.

*'Unacknowledged and unspoken ideological contradictions have always informed the ways in which cultures set up and represent femininity as a meeting point between rational and irrational discourses. Perhaps if I could gain insight into how the culture of belonging shaped the represented identities of women within it, I might also gain some perception of its own internal contradictions...'*<sup>173</sup>

Rogoff in this text (above) captures some of the struggle apparent in representing discourse on femininity. A struggle that also becomes apparent through witnessing the intensity of the focused lens of Tait's camera. The len's view - albeit mediating - becomes reflective of her own struggle for identity in the reflected image of her mother. It is clear that an interrelationship is perceived, one that is complicated, unresolved, but none-the-less highlights (possibly ambivalent) implications of belonging and identity which surface within this moving-image. This is also a point where comparisons with Landy's *Semi-detached* come to the fore.

In this context, clarity of the audio/edit choice is stark in underscoring quiet but unsettled undercurrents in the spliced images.

Editing the frames by sequences as phrases of movement, serves to isolate and intensify the image, framing an arguable ideological viewpoint, one that is informed by a response to cultural conditions at the hand of the editor (Tait). Thus it is, that the gaze is implicated within the edited frame, underscored by hand held camera movement in conjunction with the fragmented recorded voice.

The soundtrack to the film also focuses on bird song, amplifying it almost to the exclusion of other sounds interior in the whole four minutes. Beginning and ending the edited sequences is an audio

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<sup>173</sup> Rogoff I, (2000) p150.

framing device, a flute - like ditty that introduces and finishes this short, modest film.<sup>174</sup>

The audio construction (the birds and the flute) exists on a conceptual par with the visual. The importance of the birdsong cannot be underplayed as it inhabits the work and moves it away from intimate documentary/portrait to a less defined space: a mid-position assumed by the artist and so aptly described by Miwon Kwon.

Therefore, through audio engagement, the viewer witnesses with an intensity that would otherwise be denied, (akin to Çavuşoğlu, see Chapter Six) making a psychological and emotional association between the mother's body and the landscape; where a union takes place in which it is impossible to extricate the one from the other. It is here that intimacy as dialectic of site, of revealing and hiding, giving and removing, becomes internal to the image.<sup>175</sup>

Tait clearly takes with one hand and gives with the other. The one hand visually engages with both intimacy and structures that connote affection and corporeal proximity within a landscape, and the other denies intimacy by excluding sound that belongs to particular shots, such as a close up view of her mother's hands unwrapping a sweet. In this exchange, she gives the viewer birdsong, moving the image conceptually into liminal (internalised) space.

Images, though shown sequentially (almost as if stitched together in a single frame), exude a presence outside of themselves, producing matter that leaves the domain of the represented image as Deleuze

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<sup>174</sup> The flute is an Orkneys instrument similar to a penny whistle that is played at dances and celebrations.

<sup>175</sup> Hence its inclusion in two subject specific exhibitions mentioned earlier, also Tait screened her works very particularly, mainly in her studio, at a certain size and with certain seating arrangements, also mainly by private view. See also Kwon M, (2002) Introduction. See also Practice Documentation E.H.P.D.08 for how I explored the body and landscape in practice.

argues<sup>176</sup> to become experience, an interval in which viewers exist for a short time in-between or decentred, perhaps reflecting and questioning the contradictory nature that belonging entails.<sup>177</sup>

## Conclusion

These moving image works speak of old fears and joys, times past reflected in the present. The works also exude a confessional presence, born out of the intimate nature of camera techniques used. Images caught between uncertainty and prying, balance on mundane routine. They detail the minutiae of movements through carefully phrased editing, so that they take on a relevance beyond the everyday and move into symbolic space where the spoken word is divested of its content and the visual separated out, and because of this Foucault's influence can be felt in the constructed space of these multi screen installations.<sup>178</sup>

To be present in these works as a viewer - as being - is to reflect upon an intimate world of globally shared human condition, facilitated by the artist's intimate knowledge and engagement with space, site and place at such a fundamental, yet rigorous and personal level. It is through their intense regard of the small, mundane, human nature of the everyday, that correlations between all of the works in this chapter can clearly be seen, as well as comparisons made that stretch back in time to Smithson and fast forward to 1999 and *Stasi City* by Jane and Louise Wilson, and in part to my own *SOMII Hollow*.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Deleuze, G, (1983) pp45-56.

<sup>177</sup> Journal of Philosophy.VolLxxxvi.no 11.Nov 1989.[www.JSTOR.org/pss/2027036](http://www.JSTOR.org/pss/2027036)

<sup>178</sup> Foucault, M, (1989) see also Practice Documentation. E.P.P.D.12.

<sup>179</sup> See Chapter 6.

Nearness in space, time and relationship emerges as a shared, knowing strategy for production. One that arises out of encountering familiarity - not setting out to put things in relation to production, but using production as a mode of encountering in close familial proximity, relying on an intimacy with specific site to generate the conceptual materiality of the artists' work, thus SOMII's characteristics begin to be felt collectively in this chapter.

Across the works, the non-linearity of fractured narrative, multi-screens, and careful presentation in sculptural space, effectively shatter the distance between the viewer and the viewed. The moving images establish their own spacial priority or logic and are effectively sutured - through process or emplacement - into a new geographic presence, one that may be imposed from within the installation site, separate from synthetic type geography.<sup>180</sup> Here, the geographic presence unfolds itself delicately from within the images – exuding outwards - into the exhibition space, inhabiting the space around, suggestive of an other place.

Space, place and site - comprehended through the works - becomes not just fluid, but pervasive, seeping out from the image to become experience in which the viewer is provoked to make connections through their own reflected images: the footfall on the floor, the ambulation around the outside of the house structure, the birdsong of the Orkneys. Thus, philosophical mirrors are held up, and associations begin to develop between viewer, subject and the space in-between, made consciously apparent through adept filming and editing techniques. This becomes a universal characteristic experienced across the SOMIIs' in the following pages, which implicates SOMII as a possible entity.

It is in this in-between space, felt as sentient place, that notions of elsewhere begin to surface; in that the works' geography can be

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<sup>180</sup> See Chapter 3.



understood as one of erased borders, where thoughts of outside and inside, here and there, then and now, become blurred and transfigured through the installation space, and indeed are even apparent in the felt distance between single screen and viewer (particularly in the case of Tait's work, also referring back to Warhol's *Empire*).

Topologically speaking, '*The relation of the dimensions of space to that of time is one of mutual inclusion*'<sup>181</sup> reminding us that we move across boundaries unaware, relying on feedback from our senses rather than on pre-meditated action. Thus the viewer gains a pervasive sense of the geography through existing within emotional details held in the boundary of our existence, even when we witness the single screen of: Tait's *Portrait of Ga*, Almond's ballroom, or Landy's complex bi-sected semi, within which conjoined psychological and emotional geographies become intimately apparent,<sup>182</sup> their boundaries obscured through and by the event of the installation.

Site in this chapter, has place embedded into it, not easily, comfortably or neatly, but jammed, shoved and jagged. A de-stabilised, de-centred space that artists can move through and engage with in process<sup>183</sup> (and particularly witnessed in Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*), thus, depiction is surpassed, demonstrating - through drawn comparisons - SOMI's ability to move beyond categorisations of landscape to be encountered as a practice that may not wholly be viewed as mimetic of place, or fit neatly into pre-ordered aesthetic categories - which also becomes more apparent in the multiple screens of works found in the following chapter and also later in chapter six.

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<sup>181</sup> Massumi B, (2002).

<sup>182</sup> von Drathen D, (2004).

<sup>183</sup> Kwon M, (2000) pp33-43.

## Chapter 4

### Proposing synthetic geographies within site-oriented moving-image installation.

*'In slowing down, halting the image or simply showing it as it is, slowness perhaps becomes a new and vital artistic strategy...'*<sup>184</sup>

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the fixed point of view lens, used as a durational method in framing and capturing the image. Through examining the multiples and combinations of projected image screens, the text will consider the space between the durational images as affect, as a strategic device for conceptually moving across installation's dislocated spaces. These concerns build on experiential notions of in-between space felt as a sentient place – elsewhere - introduced in the last chapter through investigating familial place and proximity, here however, the artist is seen to consciously use this in-between space as a device for apprehending the viewer. In Yi Fu Tuan's text *The Space of Experience*, he contended that a space requires movement from a place to another place, similarly a place requires space to be a place and so the two notions are co-dependent and explored here through apprehending the spaces between.

The term 'synthetic geography' borrowed from contemporary geographic practice, is used in this text to explore the concerns of *'how the totality of phenomena which are located together in space interact with each other.'* Indicating how complex notions of exchange and sensation reflect the slip-stream of information that

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<sup>184</sup> Leighton T, (2008) p39.

specific geographic sites generate in artistic praxis, determined within installation space.<sup>185</sup>

It is apparent that duration has been a solid, inherent investigative strategy, seen in the experimental/historical foundations of SOMII in chapter 2. And while this chapter is initially and briefly concerned with structural work by artists in the late Seventies that have as their focus specific geographic sites, it does so to assert a notion of synthetic geography within the material process and temporal space of multi-screen projection. One that stretches across works past and present which emphasises duration as a moving image strategy, alongside the fixed point of view of the camera lens, across works past and present. Thus SOMIIs' shared characteristics will be seen to be reinforced once more, surfacing as mutual artistic concerns apparent over decades,

Professor Curry in 1991 described a synthetic geographic approach as stimulating '*...an intuitive feeling for the togetherness of events, patterns and areas...*' ascribing this as being akin to the intricacies of regional geography. Within this text the phrase is used to sum up space of (conceptual) interaction found within SOMII as space of experience.

A synthetic, human dimension to be explored.<sup>186</sup>

When we (as viewer) orient ourselves through known space - that memory inhabits – we may experience space as re-ordered through processes of visual memory being switched off, an involuntary response to familiarity, and replaced with bodily memory, which is something more fundamental, acting on sensation, and this is what

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<sup>185</sup> Langton J, (1988) p17.

<sup>186</sup> Curry L, (2009) pp2-9.

we use to navigate familiar space.<sup>187</sup> It is in this place of sense experience that I position the following texts, whilst maintaining notions expressed in the previous chapter; that patterns of contemporary culture and global concerns are produced in local as well as in non-place. Thus asserting the interwoven nature of phenomena present in these installations.<sup>188</sup> It is image in conjunction with technology that inscribes and informs space within SOMII, and image tactics or strategies developed by the artist through practice methods, that inform its spaciality.<sup>189</sup>

Synthetic geography therefore may be read as: constructed, reciprocal, conceptual, physical space, active within moving image installation. Brought about by conditions that affect the works reception. Thus the phrase might also convey signs informed by geography of specific site, not with constructivist intentions, but as an understanding of site as a fully discursive cipher of information,<sup>190</sup> through which artists invite viewers to participate, thus invoking Panofsky's *expressional* and *intuitive* ghosts in the event of the work.<sup>191</sup>

Adam Kossoff, in his thesis *On Terra Firma*, identifies certain sculptural tendencies on behalf of contemporary artists that '*arguably enlarge(s) the spacial potential of the moving image work in the gallery*'<sup>192</sup> through installation. This expansion, emphasises a position that leans towards synthetic geography's holistic spaciality, characterised by analysis that relies on all evidence witnessed and sensed, indicating synthetic geography's ability in the space of the installation, to become a plane of existence in itself - made up of

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<sup>187</sup> Masumi B, (2002) p184.

<sup>188</sup> Bourriard N, (2009) p76.

<sup>189</sup> particularly pertinent to this concept is Bourriard N, (2009), pp75-77. Also see Curry L, *The Need for Cumulative Synthetic Theory*, *The Canadian Geographer*. vol35, no1 (1991) pp2-9.

<sup>190</sup> Influenced by Kwon M, (2002).

<sup>191</sup> This can also be witnessed in previous works under discussion, see especially Daron Almonds *If I Had You*. (2003), see also Panofsky E, (1972).

<sup>192</sup> Kossoff A, (2007) pp11-12.

affects and percepts, sensed by the viewer – as a conceptual space that exists and is felt as somewhere(s) in-between.

Current multi-screen moving image projections including SOMII have histories quilted by cinema's presence, sharing - as witnessed in this thesis - some of the characteristics of Expanded Cinema.<sup>193</sup> Strategies and techniques that artists have used in order to inhabit a space outside of cinema have included: split and multiple projections, as well as back projection, which allows for integrated viewer movement and therefore shifts towards what may be considered an immersive environment.<sup>194</sup>

These techniques along with complex auditory presentations, as well as stretching, fixing, slowing down of footage and other editing strategies - aim towards effecting a durational experience for the viewer, in order to affront the spectacle of cinema's multi-edited, multi-perspectival single imagery.<sup>195</sup> This applies in particular to the site-absorbed, multi-screen tactics of filming witnessed across the history of Expanded Cinema, strategies that are often enmeshed with notions of duration and fixed point of view camera work.

Duration and interval allows movement within the frame to be isolated and so readily absorbed in perception. Merleau-Ponty's notion of '*sense experience*', which assumes presentness as a '*familiar setting of our life*' is invoked in the experience of viewing the fixed frame that, by its very duration, reduces distance between

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<sup>193</sup> Contrary to Kossoff's argument in his thesis, where he claims a bypass apparent in contemporary work to any expanded cinema across all multi-screen media.

Kossoff A, (2007). p11.

<sup>194</sup> For a concise summation of early moving image. Martin S, (2006 ) p20-21 for a fuller reading see Rees A,L, (1999).

<sup>195</sup> Early moving image installation may be read as attempts to '*articulate the aesthetics of the moving image outside or against the specifically cinematic*' which also refers to their position as opposed to hegemony of Hollywood values in the U.S. Leighton discusses the works of Structuralist filmmakers noting that their history has been re-examined and their relevance re-admitted, mapping the shift from single screen to installation. Prompted by Leighton T, (2008). p51.

viewer and image/screen.<sup>196</sup> Thus the subject (site) becomes increasingly intimate through focus, and present through durational time, akin to the extended close-up, described by Epstein as '*Photogenie of movement*.'<sup>197</sup> This is a strategy determined by seeing in itself, thus (in the context of SOMII) '*when we see a landscape we situate ourselves in it.*' When we become intimate with the subject through extended close ups or durational views, we (the viewer) experience the things in themselves as present-ness. We are now within.<sup>198</sup>

The images seen here are never simple. They may be read as pre-meditated gestures, indicative of and produced by interplay between relations of site. They are partial, incomplete and rely on a triad of potentialities. First, the raw material presence of the image; second, the image as discourse, and third, the evocative space experienced between image planes.<sup>199</sup>

Multiple picture in picture emerges as an editing strategy in SOMII, it has one tendril of its history in the quadruple split screen of Mike Figgis's *Timecode* (1999).<sup>200</sup> This approach enables subversion of linear story telling through experimental use of technology, witnessed with clarity in Ergin Çavuşoğlu's work *Point of Departure* (2006): '*The fixed frame composed on a double screen...*' seen in my own single screen version of *Hollow* (2008)<sup>201</sup> and witnessed in Susan Trangmar's *A Play in Time* (2008) showing images from a year long engagement with the site of St Ann's Well Gardens, in the Borough

<sup>196</sup> Merleau- Ponty M, (2002). Pp 60-61

<sup>197</sup> Cited in Kossoff A, (2007). p23. Also see, Epstein, J, (2000) pp.235-240.

<sup>198</sup> Berger J, (1972) p11.

<sup>199</sup> Ranciere J, trans, Gregory E, (2007).

<sup>200</sup> Aitkin D, ed, Daniel N, (2006) pp136-145.

<sup>201</sup> Shown as a single screen at Occupation Conference Brighton University 2009, Image 2.0 conference Falmouth University 2009, This work is also being shown in Toronto, Lisbon and London in 2010. See Chapter 7.

of Brighton, which I witnessed as a single split screen moving image.<sup>202</sup>

The images '*...allow(s) us to be aware of the subjective and contingent nature of our seeing, the fact that we never see the same thing twice in exactly the same way and that other subconscious processes are colouring our perceptions.*'<sup>203</sup>

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 22. Trangmar Susan *A Play in Time*, (2008). Images from the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition. South Balcony, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. September- November 2008.

The drama of the everyday is visible, made clearer through visual pauses in the edit, which act as a means to slit space and time, in the same way as a painter may slit the image plane of a canvas - implying rupture - a device that here, wrests memory from a point of steady-observation. Distancing it from linear notions of story telling. Stories, as such, are witnessed fleetingly - accidentally almost - in the edited vignettes.

In the black frame of fractional pauses, poignancy becomes both palpable and visible, sharing Mike Figgis's desire to observe phenomena by feeling present through optical *nearness* in the edit's structure - '*rather than be (ing) a prisoner of linear narrative*'<sup>204</sup>

<sup>202</sup> I have used this strategy in making my *SOMII Hollow*. See Practice Documentation. E.H.P.D.09.

<sup>203</sup> Trangmar S, *A Play In Time*. (2008). in an interview with Rebecca Drew, from a text that accompanied the exhibition. Brighton. U.K. Photoworks.

<sup>204</sup> Nearness in this sense, means familiarity in space, time and body. See also Aitkin D, ed, Daniel N, (2006) pp.136-143.

Trangmar's split screen moving image, purposefully holds a motionless lens, indicating little edited sequential development of the image within its sequence-frame. Small movements become paramount, usurping but not undermining visual sequence, often resulting in an edit where multiple visuals, edited picture in picture, are formed from image-sequences and linked together like a daisy chain to balance each other within an overall multi-image.<sup>205</sup>

In the space of site-absorbed installation, speed also becomes an emerging rhythmic image tactic. Slowing down footage (in particular, as part of image construction) enables perceptual absorption. The development of edited images into its eventual multi-form, marks a shift in spacial logic away from natural optical towards synthetic optical. Furthermore, time in this scenario becomes subservient to synthetic space internal in this type of SOMII, time becoming less important than space seen through multiple edits that eventually occupy space as image planes, thus becoming a mere facet of the spatial edit, which will be investigated through the following pages.

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<sup>205</sup> Ranciere J, (2007) This is also a strategy visible in my own SOMII *Percipere*. See Practice Documentation.W.M.I.01. and E.C.p/s.03.



## Shoreline 1

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 23. Welsby Chris. *Shoreline 1*, six screen installation (1977), colour. 16mm film. [www.sfu.ca/~welsby/Shr!not.htm](http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/Shr!not.htm) Image retrieved Jan 09

*'The significance of (structural) landscape films arises from the fact that they assert the illusion of cinema through the sensuality of landscape imagery, and simultaneously assert the material nature of the representational process which sustains the illusionism...'*<sup>206</sup>

SOMII's line of descent becomes more visible as Expanded Cinema's synthetic spaces are uncovered in works such as *Shoreline 1* by Chris Welsby, who used six un-synched projectors mounted on their sides, to screen six separate fixed moving image views of a specific geographic site of a shore-line.<sup>207</sup>

The image output visually maps a synthetic horizon and linear foreground across six-screens. Welsby describes this type of projection as Expanded Cinema and more latterly installation. *Shoreline 1* describes and demonstrates an interdependency of landscape and process as strategy, which emerged from the

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<sup>206</sup> Deke Dusinberre wrote many texts on Structuralist film makers inclinations to pursue correlations between projection and landscapes structures. This period in experimental film making history is succinctly written about from the inside by artist, Chris Welsby in *Film and Installation - A System View of Nature*. [www.sfu.ca/~welsby/writings.htm](http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/writings.htm) retrieved Jan 08.

<sup>207</sup> By this I mean that there was no attempt on Welsby's behalf to synchronise the projectors.

experimental, Structuralist film movement of the late Sixties.<sup>208</sup>

This reflects a conceptual undoing of cinema's mimetic landscape image, though not negating the essence of cinema inherent to film. It has since been termed Landscape Film, which asserts:

*'...a problematic terrain of aesthetic pleasure, in its most acute form such that a certain ambiguity towards landscape films' imagery becomes a feature of the critical discourse of the time.'*<sup>209</sup>

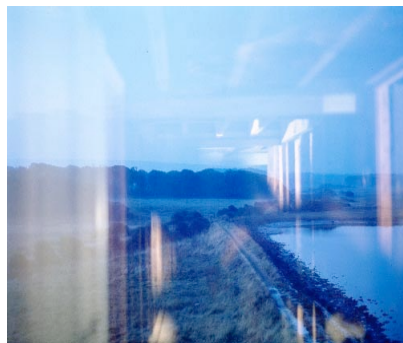


Figure 24. Welsby Chris, Raban William. *River Yar*,. (1971-1972), 35min, colour, mag stripe sound, 16mm on two screens. [www.sfu.ca/~welsby](http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby) Image retrieved Jan08

Durational tactics are visible within an earlier two-screen installation by Chris Welsby and William Raban - *River Yar* 1971-1972.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Landscape film emerged from the structural film movement, its greatest exponents in the British movement were William Raban, Chris Welsby, Davis Pearce, Jane Clarke, amongst the most successful.

<sup>209</sup> O'Pray M,W, (1970) pp107-111 I also came across this same quote cited in Kossof A, (2007) pp79-82.

<sup>210</sup> In describing the process of the film and the strategy behind it, Welsby and Raban rely on the materiality of film and technology to provide a taxonomy of the river, it is the river that directs the content towards imageness.

Shown on adjacent screens, the fixing of the camera lens is crucial to the concept, internal to the final installation, however, it is taxonomy viewed as once- removed, Filmed through the window of the mill, what is achieved is a de-centered observation that the viewer is asked to metaphorically grasp. At specific times of the filming, the elusive familiarity of the glass reflection is made 'other' by an unfamiliarity of what is seen in it; an interior semi industrial, fractured reflection fighting within the gaze of the viewer for parity with the external view. It is a 'front and back', 'here and there' view of parts. The frame of the film arbitrates the constant negotiation with the inside and outside of the image The reflection serves as a provider of 'nowness', reminding the viewer that they cannot lose themselves in the power of the cinematic image. (prompted by Chrissie Iles, Signs of the Times, Catalogue notes.1990).The film structure becomes apparent through the significance of the two screens, enabling the viewer to de-code both the process and the time shift.

The film was made around the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, using time-lapse, real time, and ambient sound. The fixed lens was crucial in these circumstances to the eventual outcome of the film.<sup>211</sup>

These early works are not to be thought of as constructivist cartographic exercises, Raban's work in particular describes a certain neutrality, and is clear visual indication of asserting inter-relatedness between technology and landscape in SOMII past and present. In essence, looking back in time, we can see that in *Thames Barrier* (Raban 1977) the filming of the geographical topography of the barrier makes no specific observations or commentary.<sup>212</sup>

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 25. Raban William, *Thames Barrier* (1977). Colour. 8mins. Collection Artist. [www.tate.org.uk/britain/artistsfilm/programme1/](http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/artistsfilm/programme1/) Image retrieved Jan09

It is a steady gaze, seemingly neutral, relying on the visual facts of site, and not prioritising any one fact above another. Viewers are required to rely on their own internal collective histories and perspectives, accessing their interior representational language in order to 'complete' the work. This tactic is also visible in Trangmar's *Play in Time* (2009). This appears to be a common overarching strategy shared by the artists in this chapter, as well in other SOMII's

<sup>211</sup> There is a clear temporal syntagmatic analysis of the first ten minutes of *River Yar*, focussing on the qualities of the image and the sound in Kossof A, (2008) pp 79-82. Also see Practice Documentation.E.P.M.I.01 Shelter 11.

<sup>212</sup> Tate on line archive describes *Thames Barrier* as being Raban's '*most neutral film*'.

gathered together under this research spotlight.

*Thames Barrier* utters a topographic sense of river across synchronised 16mm projections. The barrier structure cuts across the mid-point of three images, just slightly lower than the horizon. In eight minutes, time shifts from morning to late dusk. The consequence of concertina-ing time in this way means that viewers are actively engaged with notions of real time passing, a polarised outcome to real time sought by Warhol in *Empire*.<sup>213 214</sup>

The multiplicities of site are unfiltered. Ships come and go. Light changes. The sun comes out. Indeterminate shadows pass by and the day evaporates. Erosion of time is highly specific to this place - the barrier may stem the tide but it cannot stem the progress of the day. Time remains elemental, and on a par with site's geography, made spacially and synthetically apparent through the synchronised projections.

The formal properties of the triptych make reference to earlier landscape painters' views of the Thames,<sup>215</sup> in that the fixed position of the camera lens conjoined with compression of time by the speed of the film, indicates a desire to transcend place and its given values.

The three screens, in exposing the geography of the site through their parallel-placed breadth, are not just replicating the physical presence of the barrier, but are resonant of site's spaciality, stretched through the conjoined images. This allows for an experiential and presumptive perspective to develop in the image space's synthetic

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<sup>213</sup> Massumi B, (2002). 182,183.

<sup>214</sup> A.L. Rees points out the short comings of the Structuralist artists interpretation of Warhol's *Empire*, based on very few viewings by artists of Warhol's films at that time, which led to mis-interpretation of speeds- *Empire* was shot at sound speed but shown at slow,silent speed. Rees A.L.A (1999). p77.

<sup>215</sup> This refers back to the painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Turner's *The Burning of the Houses of Parliament* for example or the later Monet's *Houses of Parliament Sunlight Effect*. (1903)..see also Practice Documentation.E.P.M.I.01- Pink Flower.

construction.<sup>216</sup> It is this stretched space that encourages the viewer into a fuller experience of the work. The fixed viewpoint - that has been described by Trangmar as a '*Durational Still*' - has in this earlier work, been used as an effective method to invoke resonant, possibly contingent topographic aspects of specific site.<sup>217</sup> And it is this precise detail in the description of place that I turned towards in the making of *Percipere*. (See later in this chapter)

This production strategy was used structurally through the edit/installation, which in combination with how technology and apparatus appear to be inscribed within the work's concept, engages with notions of synthetic geography, clearly indicating that this pre-digital work by Raban was complex for its time both materially and conceptually.

### **This Is The Place.**

Matt White's *This is the Place* (2008), shown at Spike Island, Bristol, evokes a synthetic terrain internal to installation through the combination of duration, fixed vantage point and technology, thus demonstrating both Expanded Cinema's pervasiveness and specific site's potency as subject through SOMI's historical trajectory.

His installation consists of three large screens and a monitor. To the left is a Mormon cityscape. To the right is Las Vegas. The centre screen shows a desert location and set some distance away, a monitor hangs depicting White in a psychological portrait used almost as a final element or *coda* in the installation.

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<sup>216</sup> Tuan Yi-Fu, (1977) See Practice Documentation E.P.P.D.18.

<sup>217</sup> A phrase that describes the character of this type of shot, used by Susan Trangmar in a talk given at the Bowling Pavilion, St Ann's Well Gardens, Hove. October 30<sup>th</sup> 2008.



Figure 26. *This is the Place*, (2008) Matt White. Installation View, Spike Island Bristol. Courtesy of Matt White.

All four components of the installation use a fixed frame point of view or 'durational still', in this sense it is close to Trangmar's determined photographic definition. For Matt White '*...the durational shot allows for contemplation*' to happen within the work.<sup>218</sup>

Joanna Lowry remarks on the image's stillness as if it '*...presses itself on you...*'<sup>219</sup> admitting contingent ideological knowledge that is situated beneath the images surface, made apparent as a physical sensation by their unwavering fixed viewpoint and scale. A sensation shared by Jane and Louise Wilson's *SOMII Stasi City* (1999) as the reader will note in Chapter Six.<sup>220</sup>

Matt White embarked on a journey from Bristol to America to set about finding two topologically similar but ideologically opposed US cities. Accordingly, Salt Lake City and Las Vegas were identified and

<sup>218</sup> In conversation with Matt White, Spike Island, Bristol. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>219</sup> White M, (2008) p37.

<sup>220</sup> See Practice Documentation E.P.M.I.01.

specific locations were found within each: the centre of a Mormon temple and the windmill tower of the first hotel-casino, each site determined as being the midpoint of a city. Drawing a line between these ideologically opposed places by using G.P.S. technology, White also determined the central point for the third video as being middle of the Utah Desert. Conceptually standing for an indeterminate space, centre of right and wrong, chosen by White as a place of decision.<sup>221</sup>



Figure 27. White Matt, *Desert* (2008) 122x 69cm digital C Type.  
Courtesy of Matt White

Similar to Expanded Cinema's early practice, technology within this installation was used to envisage the very concept of the work, showing its nature of technology and geography, merging and emerging.<sup>222</sup>

*'My relationship to technology is an odd one, for a long time I have been convinced that computer technology goes beyond being a normal tool...my relationship with it starts right from the very*

<sup>221</sup> White, M, (2008) p9.

<sup>222</sup> as previously witnessed in Raban's *Thames Barrier* (1977) and also close to the work of Nicolaj Recke's *Tomorrow is Today*, (2003) see figure 3, research field map.

*beginning of the research process, so I am already engaged with this synthetic medium...that I feel directly interfaced with ...not least because of the internet, the computer itself allows me to see beyond the frame straight away, so when I am sitting in my studio with my monitor, I am gazing beyond not only in terms of cyber space but also in terms of how the ideas that I am thinking about are developing, so therefore I have a very close relationship with computer technology...*<sup>223</sup>

The centre screen of the desert is projected as high definition but owing to budget the two side screens were projected with standard projectors, even though they were filmed in high definition format.<sup>224</sup>

The framing of fixed moving image within the picture-plane became paramount to the work's concept; both sinners and saints are framed akin to proportional representations of a 'movie' by the architecture of uncomfortable locations in which White chose to film.

Both landscapes are filmed and framed from and by the architecture of multi-story car parks, loosely alluding visually to some internal filmic associations in their in-frame cropping: *'...I wanted to bring this large scale cinematic space into the gallery.'* So it was that in the visuals resolution White found the strategy for the installation.<sup>225</sup>

Matt White also understands the impact of cinema's mimetic image through practice methods of working primarily with a stills camera, which revealed that:

*'...there is something in the way the stills camera deals selectively with light and exposure which then showed me something, I didn't quite realise how important it would be in terms of the finished work... I wasn't convinced the videos would work, it was the stills that*

<sup>223</sup> In conversation with Matt White, Spike Island, Bristol. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>224</sup> it was the first time Matt White has used high definition, this was due to the Rootstein Hopkins award that enabled this work to take place.

<sup>225</sup> In conversation with Matt White, Spike Island Bristol April 8<sup>th</sup> 2009.



*I was excited about... the highly stretched cinematic frame excited me but I wasn't sure how it would translate in the space of the gallery... as a still it would be a nod to cinema rather than the more direct response of the video...*<sup>226</sup>



Figure 28. White Matt *Vegas Coaster* (2008) 122x69cm Digital C Type. Courtesy of Matt White.

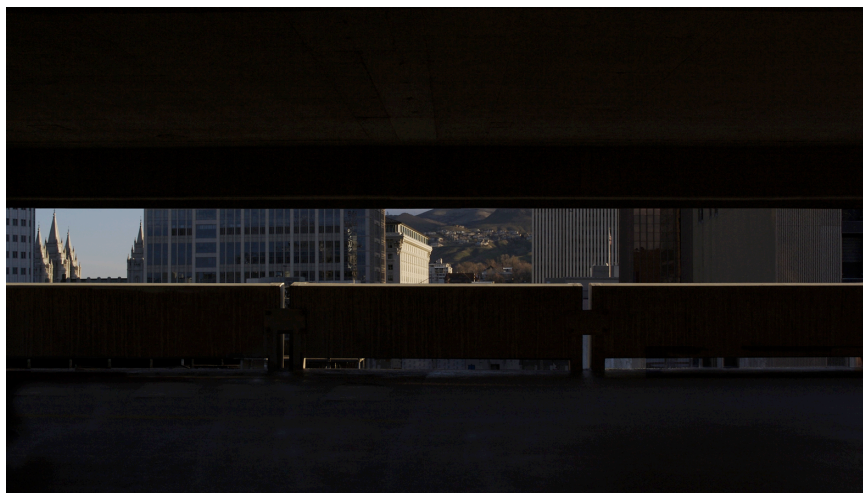


Figure 29. White Matt *Salt Lake City Temple*. (2008) 122x69 cms Digital C Type. Courtesy of Matt White.

<sup>226</sup> In conversation with Matt White, Spike Island, Bristol. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2009.

The image plane of the desert scene remains un-cropped at full size, implying in some way, less historically (in cinema terms) committed views by its comparative openness. White felt that had he framed the scene by adding black bars reminiscent of Hollywood, that it would have obligated the reading of the work too fully towards the cinematic.<sup>227</sup>



Figure 30. *This is the Place*, (2008) Matt White, shown at Spike Island Bristol. Courtesy of Matt White.

On a single monitor at a discrete distance away, White, in a separate but conceptually conjoined video *Weightless*, shows a portrait of himself under self-hypnosis experiencing the euphoria of becoming lighter:

*'Weightlessness is presented here as an idealized state, a form of symbolic release from the cares of the world, but it is also presented as a state that is inaccessible, locked within the psychology of the*

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<sup>227</sup> See Practice Documentation E.C.P.D.06.

*individual. The inaccessibility of that state is made absolute by the material presence of the screen itself'* <sup>228</sup>

The problematic of opposing representations of psychological and mythical unite in the synthetic mid ground of installation. The liminality of the desert (screen) is echoed in the viewer's weightless situated-ness, who is metaphorically suspended between psychological states; with Las Vegas on the one hand and its implied notions of gambling and excess and on the other Salt Lake City, noted for its abstinence and prayerfulness. The viewer hesitates between screens, delayed by opposing sets of things that they are encountering. Ambulation is postponed, mediation hesitant and thus space becomes performative. <sup>229</sup>

In the context of the desert image, referring to liminality means referring to a shifting transitional space. In her paper '*Looking for Liminality in Architectural Space*', Catherine Smith asserts that '*Installation art denotes a place of slippage ...revealing ways of looking at space and user experience as a form of art in itself.*' <sup>230</sup>

Slippage in this way indicates the viewers movement as being inhibited, they are caught between.

White uses synthetic space internal to this installation to describe geography's span, again akin to earlier Structuralist intentions. It is palpable, vital space, through which the viewer moves and is held within, constructed between visual and audio dialogues of four moving images on three screens and one monitor. A synthetic shifting space that operates as much out of the utterances of separate monologues - written by White - that emanate from each as from the placement of the screens/monitor in the gallery space.

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<sup>228</sup> remarked by Joanna Lowry in her essay in the Catalogue that accompanied the exhibition. White Matt. (2008). p42.

<sup>229</sup> remarked by Joanna Lowry in her essay in the Catalogue that accompanied the exhibition. White Matt. (2008) p42.

<sup>230</sup> <http://limen.mi2.hr/index.html> retrieved Jan 09.

The audio sounds of the male voices - restless, and in some ways predatory - tell of fragments of scenes. Through these fractured narratives, unearthly sounds punctuate the dreamlike state that is apparent between the three other screens. The source of the noise is found emanating from a wall-mounted monitor.

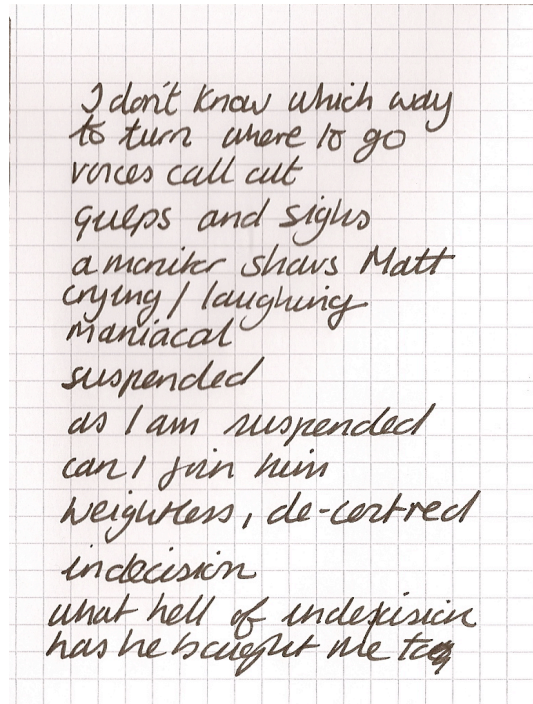


Figure 31. From notebooks Michele Whiting (2008)

The central landscape of desert is overwhelming in scale. The voice-over states how small the feeling is in its open spaces. The narrative is not driven by any overt structure. Each separate voice represents the everyman. The words speak of Matt White's experiences on his journey: *'in a sense the idea was to bring the viewer along with me'*,<sup>231</sup> by telling mythical fractured tales of place and time, and via the medium itself monologues intercut, mirror and intersect - *'the texts eventually merging into identical reflections on the foundations of the cities themselves.'*<sup>232</sup>

<sup>231</sup> In conversation with Matt White, Spike Island, Bristol. April 2009.

<sup>232</sup> Joanna Lowry in her essay in the Catalogue that accompanied the exhibition. White Matt. (2008).p40.

The voice-overs are efficiently edited, with pauses in between phrases. Vital to the work, they direct viewers between the screens and punctuated sounds of the monitor through both levels and emplacement. They also act to suspend the viewer within the internal synthetic architecture, allowing for imaginative metaphorical lines to be drawn between screens. Thus insinuating the very lines of the G.P.S. system that White used in constructing this work. And it is at this point that the work feeds its conceptual way back to Welsby, Raban and Expanded Cinema of the early seventies, threads of connectivity gathered together and evidenced through the process of this SOMII's construction.<sup>233</sup>

### **Esc.**

*This is the Place* (Matt White 2008) and *Esc.* (Lucy Gunning 2004) both view landscapes through witnessing idiosyncratic human behaviour. Both have multiple-screens showing different sites drawn together through an interior geographic synthetic space, activated and felt by the ambulant viewer within the installation.

*Esc* is shown on three monitors suspended from the gallery ceiling, at first glance the space underwhelms, there are three disparate units of display seemingly forced together into one space. It is sparse, workman-like. Open in the sense of discovery.

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<sup>233</sup> This also links back to Smithson's notion of 'suspension' in Chapter 2, i.e. the location is suspended.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 32. Gunning Lucy, *Esc* (2004) From a Monograph of Lucy Gunning. 2007. Matts Gallery London.

*Esc*, was first developed and shown at Matts Gallery, London (2004). The video sequences run for varying lengths of time and are not synchronised; screen one duration 14minutes, screen two 12minutes and screen three 15minutes, original format mini DV.

The three individual installations that make up the complete project *Esc*. scrutinise human behaviour and its '*changes of state*' through '*...esoteric practice, intoxication and protest*' within a unified environment.

The primary subject matter of the three videos varies. In one intoxicated commuters wait at a station, in another environmental protestors stake their claim high in treetops, and in the third, a Qi-Qong class reaches a transformative state. However seemingly distant that the relationships between the subjects may appear, the subtext implies not only questioning human relationships but also importantly, immediate and physical implications of the site in which the physical action takes place. Synthetic space is asserted through Gunning's installation strategy '*...the surprise at the heart of Esc is*



*an intuitive if improbable sense of its belonging together.'*<sup>234</sup>  
witnessed within universal installation space.

Gunning's methodology in this work stemmed from her need to overcome spacial concerns that she had encountered conceptually even before filming began. She spent eight weeks '*building the installation from the inside*' before installing the moving image, thereby gaining an understanding of not only the actual space of the gallery but also possibilities of imaginative space.<sup>235</sup>

In fact she was *forming with space*.<sup>236</sup> The surprise, I would argue, is carefully formed internal space within the whole installation - the *in-between* space - that fuses these video works into a single space - termed here as synthetic.

Robin Klassnick, curator at Matts Gallery seemingly acknowledges the work's disparate nature and its outcomes in terms of gallery space and the *life* of the work:

*'...Lucy is fairly adamant that this is one piece of work.'*<sup>237</sup>  
However '*as time goes on my experience tells me that they will be displayed differently and I think to some degree watching them (the moving image) with a large painting of concentric circles was a painting in one way but was a background or ... (a place) in which something stood and operated from... in Lucy's work three different videos working in different spaces work together to create a narrative... they talk between them....through these spaces.*'<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Gunning L, (2007) pp 116.

<sup>235</sup> Gunning L, (2007). pp 118.

<sup>236</sup> A notion that spacial constructs as 'Synthetic Geographies' can be further explored by looking back in time, in an article in 1978, American Sculptor and writer Robert Morris validates his concerns towards artists who in their practice use '*forming with space*' as a method in determining situation as a defining of space. He admits the subjective implications of admitting spacial perception as the '*only allowable one*' and in '*pursuit of the contradictory*' assumes it as '*the only basis for perceiving dialectical reality*'. '*that requires physical movement and duration, (which) invariably puts a stretch between the 'I' of the realtime experience and the 'me' of the retrospective constituent.* Morris Robert. (1978) pp70-81.

<sup>237</sup> Robin Klassnick, in conversation at Matts Gallery London October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007.

<sup>238</sup> Robin Klassnick, in conversation at Matts Gallery London October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007.

On entering Matts Gallery, a gentle cacophony of recognisable but unfamiliar sound combinations emit, the separate aural sounds are purposefully not integrated with each other and as such work against each other:

*‘... It was three spaces but it was all fresh air, it was three different soundtracks... the birds...the shakers...the station... I think we are all aware of that more than anything else...’*<sup>239</sup>

This breeds an uncertainty in the newly arrived viewer, commensurate with the unfamiliar SOMII terrain, achieved to a large degree by delicate handling of sound, but also due to difficult acoustics in the space at Matts Gallery.

*‘...it is interesting how an artist such as Lucy pulls it together in such a show, these images could be sculptures but they’re not they are real life...it is like a sound piece...quite generous in feel... the sound levels were very delicate, the sound level was very low, Lucy Gunning is not heavy handed, and the sound, (it) is difficult to imagine her with a booming sound...it is also how one negotiates the space, they were not synchronized it is just how you create three spaces in fresh air...’*<sup>240</sup>

Another tactic that Gunning used to unify the singular video installation spaces, was to focus the camera lens on the subject matter in a fixed determined way within each individual work. In one, the camera is positioned as if in the place of a train station notice board late at night, so that drunken commuters strain upwards to read the train time-table. This is presented on a monitor positioned high in the upper half of a hardboard box, itself suspended from the

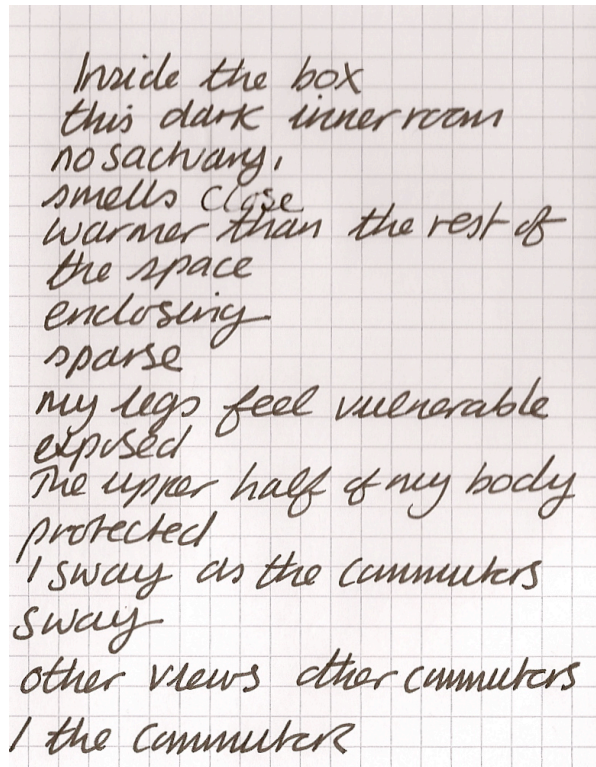
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<sup>239</sup> Robin Klassni in conversation at Matts Gallery, London. October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007. Also See Practice Documentation E.C.P.D.09.

<sup>240</sup> Robin Klassnik in conversation at Matts Gallery, London. October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007.



ceiling. The viewer, in watching the image physically replicates the action of the commuters.



Inside the box  
 this dark inner room  
 no sachary,  
 smells close  
 warmer than the rest of  
 the space  
 enclosing  
 sparse  
 my legs feel vulnerable  
 exposed  
 The upper half of my body  
 protected  
 I sway as the commuters  
 sway  
 other views other commuters  
 I the commuter

Figure 33. From notebooks. Michele Whiting. (2004)

The hardboard surround of the screen's environment encourages the viewer to take a chance and duck underneath. With many people enclosed alongside, the viewers are made aware of their own state of being, identifying their posture with the familiarity of waiting for a train; remembered, shared actions linking one viewer emotionally to another.

In the second video of eco-warriors, the camera is positioned lower. Looking up to treetops, we find surprising imagery of a caravan suspended by ropes, as well as an upward view of trees under threat from development. The image is again mirrored in the stance of the

viewer who mimetically looks up to see the monitor/caravan suspended from the ceiling.

The third view is shot from within a room looking down onto a Qi Qong class. The camera lens has conceptually become deified, looking down on her subjects, who in turn look up towards the monitor - the deity – the lens - this question mark in the work, is typical of Gunning's use of the body of the viewer, and leaves any formal resolution of the work open and unresolved.

The viewer through *performative* action mimetically enacts the body image interior in the moving image through the constructed environments of emplaced monitors - through which viewers become aware of their external body as separated, so that within this new synthetic space, doubling occurs.

In this way, normalising systems of expected behaviour are put aside in the bodily positions that viewers are coerced to take. The viewer relinquishes self referential systems, instead and also allusions are created, mirroring a politicised quasi reality. Gunning insinuates new abstract signs within the installation's spacial structure, such as a rainbow shape in one shade of red, reminiscent of peace and love posters of the 70's. This in effect works as a backdrop, filling the peripheral field of vision. Through interlacing the video and its position or relationship to the graphic rainbow, the *total* installation becomes a new and complex temporal system, synthetic terrain created by separate, yet intrinsically united installations.<sup>241</sup>

Gunning's sculptural bias uses space in the upper half of the gallery to suspend the work, and as an artistic strategy it informs a unified synthetic environment within the overall installation, in a similar vein

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<sup>241</sup> Kabakov I, (1997) p245.

to Darren Almond's use of the lower half of the gallery in *If I had You*. (2003).<sup>242</sup>

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 34. Gunning Lucy, *Esc* (2004) Video Installation, dimensions variable, exclusive. Matts Gallery 2004. Image from Lucy Gunning, Monograph, Matts Gallery, London.2007

A sense of spaces fusion can also be experienced through aural and sensory fields that interlink via the viewers migration as they move across space from one screen to another: '*I am sure she was absolutely aware of the (viewer's) bodily performance within the work*'<sup>243</sup>

A correlation to Matt White's *This is the Place* (2008) may be drawn. In both works, decisive actions of the viewer forces them to move across psychological boundaries from '*I*' into '*me*' - as the previous constituent of the installation is added to memory - invoking the *stretch* described by Robert Morris and experienced as boundary

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<sup>242</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>243</sup> Robin Klassnik in conversation at Matts Gallery, London. October 9<sup>th</sup>. 2007. This is also a strategy that I have explored in *Hollow*. See Practice Documentaion E.H.M.I.01.

and un-boundary simultaneously within the event of being in, thus enunciating the affect of sensation as *being*.<sup>244</sup>

In line with Matts Gallery's ethos, Gunning worked in the space for two months prior to opening, responding to space through a process of sculptural experimentation:<sup>245</sup>

*'...In preparing for Esc the artist spent a lot more time building the installation from the inside, thinking about the set's construction before its animation commenced, working in the gallery over an eight week period prior to making the films. She built out from the walls with cardboard boxes and newspapers, trying various forms of buffers and replicating the ceiling, with its grids of beams, by means of lines of pages from the 'Financial Times'. Eventually she took the cardboard and removed it to a semi-enclosed corner, and instead used the long wall for a graphic representation of something that united the three disparate films.'*<sup>246</sup>

Lucy Gunning is first and foremost a sculptor working with video. Referring to the enclosed corner in which the commuter video work is positioned, curator Robin Klassnik remarks:

*'...There is nothing more sculptural than this cube...hanging from the ceiling, you need to get underneath...it is pure formalistic (sic)...'* Her experimental working process was her way of *'working through the space.'* She used the space in this way and then installed the works... the image (referring to the red concentric circles) of the work came from an invitation... the concentric circles went into the ground...pushes into the ground while the box goes upwards...it is performative in its own way... we site works... they are sited

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<sup>244</sup> Morris R, (1978) Pp70-81.

<sup>245</sup> Matts Gallery has a very particular ethos that encourages the artist to work within the space for a considerable period of time before showing and in this way the spacial boundaries become blurred somewhere between studio and gallery.

<sup>246</sup> Gunning L, (2007) p118.

*specifically for this space, sometimes these works do go to other spaces... as time has progressed I think artists are more canny, they have words such as re-presentation for re-using and re-siting these works...*<sup>247</sup>

Klassnik<sup>248</sup> also describes Gunning's spacial awareness: *'Lucy's show was a bit like being on a piece of elastic or a concertina...*<sup>249</sup>

This concertina effect of space/time is indicated by Brian Massumi as a strategy for negotiating known space. Klassnik in remarking on the works' spacial affect draws attention to the importance of spaces' physicality: Gunning herself talks about space and its significance and although she may use just a single monitor within a space, she installs it with particular attention to that spaces specificities.<sup>250</sup>

Robin Klassnick elucidates, describing an earlier work that Lucy Gunning made in Matts Gallery that similarly worked the architectural space of the gallery:

*'...Jane Malcolm and Lloyd (1997)... this was totally to do with stretching and sound... When she began to install it was a disaster...*

<sup>247</sup> Robin Klassnik in conversation at Matts Gallery, London. October 9<sup>th</sup>. 2007.

<sup>248</sup> The way that the viewer is implicated in the work, wasn't discussed during the process of its making, Robin Klassnik admits that 'I didn't understand until it was made how the viewers would be implicated in the work' *This was a different piece for Lucy... on a grand scale... they don't necessarily get the acclaim they deserve at the time of making but five or six years later they come into their own' The work takes on a sort of characteristic...it is because I am constantly in the space, and talking, this can be a good thing and a bad thing, how much an artist listens and doesn't listen depends, but that is the nature of what I have chosen to do here. ...'some artists talk more about their intentions...some more in emotional terms... some in content terms...*

<sup>249</sup> Robin Klassnik in conversation at Matts Gallery, London, October 9<sup>th</sup>. 2007.

<sup>250</sup> Massumi B, (2002). And Gunning L, (2003) p63. Earlier still, in 1993 Gunning's evocative and probably best known work, (8 minute, low tech video), *'Climbing Around My Room'* shows the navigation of a large room by a woman climbing literally around it without touching the floor; she uses every available construct or feature of the room to gain some purchase before making her next move, dressed in a red dress, she clambers from doorknob to wainscote, from window ledge to bookshelf. This earlier work could be read as a literal consumption of the space around her. It strongly demonstrates sculptural curiosity, and could be considered a prelude to the spacial concerns that are made apparent within subsequent videos and appear to come to the fore within *Esc, 2004*, which shows a characteristic, shifting experience of spacial relationships between the three locations of the screens.

*she was in tears that day...in retrospect between us we decided we would move out of this space into other spaces so that the sound wouldn't interfere with each other...*

He continues: *'you were stretched through the space...you would have to get up... you were propelled through it, you were like the stutter itself... you became the frustrated performer dragged from one person to another... it wasn't synched or anything...but this was bought upon by circumstance of the space, not envisaged in the early making.'* Referring back again to Esc, *'...you gotta (sic) stay with it, otherwise works such as Esc don't come to fruition... you have to make a journey here'*, (doubly referring to the location of Matts Gallery in Mile End and the duration within the work): *'a commitment, the chances are that you will stay longer than somewhere off of a street...'*

The way in which the totality of visual phenomena came together-through artistic negotiation - is mediated in Gunning's use of the fixed point of view camera as a strategic unifying device serving to steady the unevenness of installation space. Viewing thus becomes a push and pull between understanding relationships between 'things', such as the curved red lines behind the tree protestors, or the cardboard surround of the commuters, or the empty space that surrounds the moving image of the Qi Qong class, which itself becomes objectified through experiencing the other two videos.

*'...she quite deliberately removes herself from the work, she is a reserved, quite private person, the work she makes is quite private...the way she implicates people is private, she doesn't do much editing, she observes, there is no hidden agenda, these drunks at Liverpool street for instance didn't know they were being filmed...'*<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Robin Klassnik in conversation at Matts Gallery, London. October 9<sup>th</sup>. 2007.

This filming strategy reflects Gunning's objectivity as film-maker, removing herself from the technology of the camera and from an overt subjective viewpoint as much as possible. An experimental yet systematic working method has enabled Lucy Gunning to take a pragmatic approach to installation, allowing her to break down binary notions of form and content, exploring difficult notions of locating new place - of emplacement - to create a synthesised space.<sup>252</sup>

*Esc* drew new tentative borders - borders that spoke atmospherically as well as physically, conjunctive and disjunctive at the same time, a commonality shared with White's *This is The Place*, through which revealed space was defined as synthetic, such works hover in an indeterminate space - in the margins of the real world.

In effect, both she and Matt White re-instate video's position as a hybrid inter-medium, exploring through artistic strategies a process of: unraveling, re-coding and re-forming space.<sup>253</sup>

## **Percipere**

**To follow my process, please go to Practice Documentation, East. E.P.P.D.01-18 plus photo/stills and moving image.**

My own work *Percipere* tests out how separate images become synthesised, spacial experience, through production and installation processes.<sup>254</sup> Seeing beyond, sensing something outside of the frame, are also notions explored in this multi-screen work. Above all it is illustrative of a work's construction that, like White's G.P.S. system, has from the outset, an internal logic to filming.

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<sup>252</sup> Artist Tacita Dean admitted to the elusive nature of locating 'place' in the introduction of 'Place', Dean Tacita, Millar Jeremy, (2005) p11.

<sup>253</sup> Martin S, (2006) p7.

<sup>254</sup> Referring back to synthetic geography.

Static camera lens' focus on a type 22, Chiver's built pillbox and its immediate environment, situated at the side of the Kennet and Avon Canal, in Seend, Wiltshire. Filmed over a period of two years, it reflects my position as "modest witness" making intermittent visits to the site, witnessing effects of weather, time and duration.<sup>255</sup>

The sites visual scope and size were determined by estimating an average velocity range of a rifle used by home guards in World War II. This measurement remains arbitrary, because the weapons were never wholly satisfactory, due to kinetic and chemical damage.<sup>256</sup> In relating a possible physical history of site to lens-work an internal logic began to present itself. Thus the points of filming radiating from the pillbox's sights (or squints), assume an historical dialogue with an imagined bullet - internal to the works filmic structure.

Notions of static point of view moving image have been raised with historical and contemporary emphasis within this chapter, and indicated throughout as a mechanism that may be used as a visual tie between disparate images, as seen in Gunning's multi-monitor work *Esc*, and as a means of duration inherent within the concept of the work, as in Trangmar's *A Play in Time*. This is also seen in the juxtaposition of images and pauses insinuated in the edit's structure,<sup>257</sup> thus synthetic geography becomes apparent within my SOMII, (argued for through interrogating both Gunning's and White's installations).

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<sup>255</sup> Chiver was a local building company that secured the wartime contract around this area to construct part of the interior stop-line. This was common practice around the rural parts of the country, and the pillboxes were made out of material's common to the region in which they were built, based on availability as much as anything else.

<sup>256</sup> i.e. the damage caused by the moving bullet and the way it finally engaged at the site of impact, has been a relationship that remains unclear, so tracing an exact point in distance for the trajectory of a bullet will be ambiguous.

<sup>257</sup> Viewing Trangmar's work *A Play in Time* as a screening, gave me courage at a low point in the edits to continue with this working strategy.





Figure 35. Whiting Michele (2009) Stills from *Percipere*.

I use durational stills within *Percipere* to amplify site's movements, a passing shadow, or a leaf moving:

*'...it is the (video) machine which translates the duration of pure perception into human duration.'*<sup>258</sup>

Time in this way becomes manifest - spring, summer, autumn and winter - intercut, over-layered and non-sequential. Images and sounds disparate, the filming is configured into one of an infinite set of variables. It exists in excess of the original temporal surface of images, exceeding even experience of site.

The central screen shows: un-synched, non-sequential, over-layered edits of site footage, the transitions of which, show varied flows of visual information, not rhythmic but jagged in its editing approach. Transitions between shots remain (for the most part) hard cuts, evident as part of the overall imageness. The lengths of some shots have been calibrated to push at notions of 'seeing' further - thus reflecting the work's title - while lingering at a slightly uncomfortable rate before the frame changes to another image. I have considered time/space (and thus editing) akin to a concertina. The filming and subsequent edits reside in folds of experience within site, superseding site and thus prompting notions that affects have arguably arisen.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>258</sup> LeightonT, (2008) pp287-288.

<sup>259</sup> Massumi B, (2002).

Perception becomes entwined with duration. The static point-of-view witnessed across all sequence frames, I would argue, challenges essential perception to move past a cursory glance into a space beyond, described by Deleuze and Guattari as '*percept beyond perception*' an independent state of being.<sup>260</sup> Perception through implication becomes close to Bergson's image-matter, his descriptive '*Visual Dust*' as matter that is something outside of the pragmatic image, accrued from sight-sensation and represented to us either when we have our eyes closed or even as a prompt to enter a dream state. It is the layering of images that formulates this dream-like state through which familiarity becomes strange - layering one space/time over another, one condition over another.<sup>261</sup>

The moving image is framed through these compositional strategies dictated by repeat site visits, so as to open up space/time visual pathways through juxtaposing images, and in so doing I have waited for a plant to grow to relate to a pre-shot image; a decision taken with knowledge gained through familiarity with site. Equally, I have waited for a weather change in order to re-film in a different light. In this way repeated visits have been vital to the work.

Camera techniques can be used to implicate the artist, and in some image frames I have used a hand held camera, implicating myself as witness to the site. The fractional camera movement dictated by my body, becomes internal to the images' logic, and however fractional/marginal they might appear, they remain divisive - not only implying presence, but also indicating a psychological subtext, nodding towards contemporary cinematics.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Deleuze G, and Guattari F, (1994).

<sup>261</sup> Bergson H, <http://fiiiby.com/file/224289/61syrbwgr.html>. Retrieved March 2010.

<sup>262</sup> Such as fly on the wall documentary style footage, used within contemporary television and cinema.

The frame is considered within the work, not hidden or softened by images or installation, and so is constantly being reflected in the mind of the viewer. Who, through shifting images is kept alert to the changes held within, and reminded of being outside of the work through each shift, thus re-framing occurs, allowing for further space to develop - space that considers exteriority and interiority, that pushes back, away from the flatness of the surface image, mutating and morphing pervasively/synthetically between the image planes.

The sound also acts as a metaphorical framing device, as it shifts in levels across the speakers. The viewer is pulled by the sound to the screen associated with it, akin to (particularly) the work of Matt White.<sup>263</sup> Space begins to be aurally constructed, placing the viewer within its synthesis, questioning how we, (as artists) influence viewers through the very construction of installation space.

The synthetic space of *Percipere* has - in studio - amounted to relations between sets of images and the relative scales of images. For example: a close-up view of vivid pink wild flowers, larger in scale than the other projections, cuts across the room, filling the senses with rhythmic sensation and vital colour, and forming a bridge across the internal architectural stretch of the projected work.

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<sup>263</sup> Also, Chapter 7 in the work of Ergin Çavuşoğlu.



Figure 36. Whiting Michele. (2009).  
Studio notebook. The pink flowers seen here as side-by-side projections, in studio, demonstrating image scale and juxtaposition.

An engagement with installation space is made apparent in the relationship between the vivid wavering flower (scale being a determining factor) of the separated projection and one sequence frame of images (here) shown laterally. The very presence of pink wild flowers interrogates Henri Bergson's ontological descriptions of '*returning colour*' to our perceptual sensors, here, re-introduced through colour, form and movement processed through video's technological status. The colour returns through projecting, thrown forward into synthetic space: a space occupied by the situated viewer, implicating them in bright colour, and arguably returning colour to them from the original site of filming.<sup>264</sup>

The rhythm of the pink plants gently sways, impacting on the viewer's physical body. Speed has been altered to slow down the flower images as they move into the frame.

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<sup>264</sup> Leighton T, (2008) p 288.

The visual is seductive, colour bright and movements 'free' in relation to the '*durational stills*'<sup>265</sup> It's installation will very much depend on the architecture of the space within which it will be sensitively shown.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 37. Rist Pipilotti, *Ever is All Over* (1997) Two Channel Video Projection.  
<http://cloud.hauserwirth.com/documents/dXquks0520tythgN44pdiO3u6Y8P1U6ushn3HG0hVeCHrr45tL/large/5406.jpg&imgrefurl> retrieved September 09

The flower footage cuts across to rupture the rigid line of the three projections reminiscent of the twin projection work of Pipolotti Rist's *Ever Is All Over Part 1* 1997. The free image in this way, removes us (the viewer) from the constraints of the frame, intensifying our seeing.<sup>266</sup> Perception becomes entwined with duration. Incidental movements through time thus become focal, provoking a sense of movement that builds a metaphorical bridge across space between the moving image and the viewer, invoking an imaginative stretch between here and there, thus testing out synthetic space through which we witness how this paradoxical situation is used as a strategy within the process of installing SOMII.

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<sup>265</sup> A phrase that describes the character of this type of shot, used by Susan Trangmar in a talk given at the Bowling Pavilion, St Ann's Well Gardens, Hove. October 30<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>266</sup> Kossoff A, (2007) pp46-48.

## Conclusion

The notion of synthetic geography emerges as constructed, experienced space between separated image planes; space which weaves the imaginative substance of images - however disparate - together into a whole unified experience. '*Forming with space*'<sup>267</sup> and investigating the totality of phenomena in space, that *This is the Place*, *Esc*, and *Percipere* all strive towards. Different from the works in Chapter 3 through a distancing of familiarity and connectedness to the site of filming, yet beginning to share some of the pervasive sense of geography felt within the elsewhere space between the image planes.

There is a correlation in these works to Smithson's *non sites*, through the relocating of matter in the space of the gallery; Smithson's matter being geological, and these works collectively being visual matter gathered from site. They also reflect Smithson's ambiguous position towards the film material as art medium, but one that maintains a dialogue with the prospective viewer. By this I mean that site used as subject (in the filming and editing process) absents itself from the original site, re-locating it as new imaginal place in the space of the gallery - reflecting back to Tuan's conjecture that place needs space to locate it, and in this sense to re-locate it.

Geography is again sensed between - sometimes descriptive of a technological process as in White's work, and often as a strategy to unify, as in Gunning's *Esc*. Whilst my work *Percipere* has manifested these strategies, not merely through conceptual architecture of the moving image, but knowingly, considering synthetic space between image planes as the kind of space that holds the viewer. Arguably sound also plays an important role in construction, but is here less

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<sup>267</sup> Morris R, (1978).

assertive than in works seen in later chapters such as *Point of Departure*.<sup>268</sup>

In this chapter, Gunning has been seen to instate her work from a sculpturally aestheticised platform, where she sees, measures and unites space as objects in space, whilst Matt White's installation become liminal space through constructing space conceptually from the outset in conjunction with the technology that he uses (G.P.S.), with a left, right, and centre (screens) and margin (monitor) bias to the moving image works. My work, *Percipere* also describes topological and psychological displacement held within installation space, its internal filmic logic (of the site) although obscure within the gallery space,<sup>269</sup> helps weave the in between space, otherwise known here as synthetic.

Through apprehending these practice methods, notions of synthetic geography become palpable and thus gain ground as a shared method of installation. The synthetic terrain of the spaces interior to these contemporary works holds the viewer in its midst, experienced and felt as sutured in-between images. Thus the interval is stretched between them. This, when examined more closely, emerges from this chapter as a collective strategy which cannot wholly be consumed in one short take, but needs longer contemplation through active physical engagement, which is a position also shared by, and explored further in the SOMII in Chapter Six.

Surrounded by images, slight disturbances are imparted to the viewer through the discordant relations of durational visual planes. Common to all the SOMII explored in this thesis, the de-situated viewer senses bewilderment and loss, only regaining composure

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<sup>268</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>269</sup> This refers back to the way in which the filming was structured at the outset such as the velocity range of the bullet and so on.

through a filter of consciousness.<sup>270</sup> Contending with spacial differences, the viewer, through an internal editing system caused by bodily movement, experiences viscerally synthetic geography within the installation's spaces. This is something strongly shared with the works discussed in chapter 6, and is shared to a lesser extent throughout the works under discussion here. Experience of being in the artwork progresses and morphs through the viewers' commitment within it, metaphorically traveling from unsettled feelings, bewilderment and questioning to an understanding of a meta-place - a place of heightened perception, a temporal plane of existence, wherein the viewer becomes hyper self-aware, caught within a synthetic realm.

It is this very viewer experience that has initiated the groupings of these works in this chapter, indicating a mutual space of artistic interest, and clearly sharing ground with the works examined in later chapters, again indicating that SOMII may begin to be thought of as a living, breathing entity.

*'...the projection, (as opposed to the illusionistic time of narrative) create(s) an apperceptive experience in which viewers become aware of their own cognitive process in response to the unfolding of the film.'*<sup>271</sup>

Space, place and site are sensed as porous in the extreme, and seen through encountering these installations, become internal or even intrinsic to the installations' architecture. Not by any overt tertiary indicators or any attempts at mimeticism, but through bodily experience as the primacy of images and their internal and external

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<sup>270</sup> Massumi B, (2002). This displaced corporeal habitation of space is felt in Gunning's and White's installations, emanating from the historical situated-ness of the structuralist filmmakers of the Seventies. This is a mutual strategy witnessed to great effect by the artists past and present in this text, and brought to the fore in the works encountered in chapter 7, echoes of which resonate through all of the works in this chapter.

<sup>271</sup> Leighton T, (2008).



rhythms are felt - however dissonant. This is temporary, fleeting and is poised at the point where the viewers' understanding of place as real inhibits their bodily experience of the work in situ. Hence, Gunning's *Esc*, although at first glance discordant, becomes a sequence of bodily (one could almost say performative) re-enactments.

It is because of this, that the site oriented moving image installations in this chapter not only complete themselves, but also indicate towards the other SOMIs (in this thesis) that form other dimensions of experience. It is this imaginal space, emanating from original site, which calls the works into their being recognised as a type. In the next chapter, this dimension becomes manifest through arousing space and time as surges of imagery that hold the viewer through site determined artistic activity, these are encountered further by the reader, as site's historical presence unfolds itself as material to be used by the artists in pursuit of uttering space, site and place through the syntax of experience.

## Chapter 5

**History and Memory: some ways in which artists develop strategies to enquire into memory and place through negotiating SOMII's multiple spaces.**

### Introduction

In chapters three and four, space is comprehended outside of the image planes, induced largely through a complex inter-lacing that develops across the disparate images, as in Landy's or Gunning's installations. The affected viewer is required to move across the space, experiencing place through their movement and through their own internalised geography. However, the works in this chapter now turn towards a less physical, and more imaginative (internal) space more in common with Margaret Tate's *Portrait of Ga* (chapter three) and which has become apparent across a number of site oriented moving image works, past and present.

The collective focus of these works describes an acute attention to geographic site's historical specificities, sharing their intense focus with the concentration shown through engaging with familiarity seen in chapter three, which again indicates a leaning towards being thought of as an entity (SOMII). The works discussed in this chapter collectively resonate with cultural memory poised at an intersection where imageness and viewer both converge and collide; '*where individual meets collective, and psychic meets social*' <sup>272</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> The concept of collective memory born in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century emerged clearly in the 1970's, it was defined by Lavabre, as an interaction between historical memory and the recollection. See also: <http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/en/press/compress/memoire/lavabre.htm> retrieved 9/20/05

I now argue that site must include place. It must melt place into its very surface. Place is central: place as locus defined by and easily grasped by memory, it can also be fictitious. '*Place serves to situate one's memorial life*'. The link between place and Heidegger's notion of a primary topology as '*heeding*', acknowledges place as a site of memory, but site understood as a holding bay - as a container of things.<sup>273</sup>

*'Artists become semionauts, the surveyors of a hypertext world that is no longer a classical flat space but a network infinite in time as well as space...'*<sup>274</sup>

Thus place and site are interchangeable and interdependent. Sites have place within and through them. Sites are more than a set of empty co-ordinates. They issue from, surround, morph, and melt into place. Place can be interchangeable and transparent within site - held in infinite space.

This chapter interprets place-memory to be location specific, '*place is selective for memory... and on the other hand... memories are selective for place...*' A memory can be prompted by place and yet selective in the kinds of memory activated. A place conversely is mise-en-scene to remembered events. Place gives an *authentically local habitation* by being memory's transient *place-holder*.<sup>275</sup> And because of this an intimate relationship between image, memory and place is therefore capable of being realised by the artists in this text, to be consumed by the body of the viewer experiencing SOMII.

*'...the lived body...makes it ideally suited as a means of mediating between two such seemingly different things as memory and place'*

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<sup>273</sup> Casey Edward S. (2000) p189.

<sup>274</sup> Bourriaud N. (2009) p184.

<sup>275</sup> Casey E.S. (2000) p189.

This was previously witnessed in viewing Margaret Tait's work *Portrait of Ga* (1954), and makes apparent the lived body's ability to mediate and experience uneven, and often emotive adjacencies within the folds of moving image installation's experience.<sup>276</sup>

*'If art moves us, it is because as viewers we discover that art strikes a hidden chord deep within us: in its capacity to articulate passions that have lost their power of speech...Artistic creativity and knowledge - at every level, in every sphere - are intrinsically bound to emotion.'*<sup>277</sup>

Space will now be seen to be the supersession of place and site. Space is now fluid, transient and malleable in the extreme; space wherein place and site become virtual torrents of information that the contemporary artist can use to utter what is no longer visible, and make audible what is no longer heard. Thus the artists once again use sites specificities as the plane of material, used to bring their works to resonant fruition. It is here that once again the SOMII share ground.

The SOMII in this chapter, are poised to prick at the memory of our conjoined pasts. Jacques Ranciere declared that artists involved with strategies using images as *ciphers of history* (in installation) deal with specific devices:

*'The device of the installation can also be transformed into a theatre of memory and make the artist a collector, archivist or window-dresser, placing before the visitor's eyes not so much a critical clash of heterogeneous elements as a set of testimonies about a shared history of the world.'*<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Casey E.S, (2000) p189.

<sup>277</sup> von Drathen D, (2004) p21.

<sup>278</sup> Ranciere J, (2007) p25.

This text will demonstrate how images in these circumstances become metaphorical, wherein the concept that conditions them has been condensed to the trace of shared history contained within, producing works about yearning, loss and need, reflecting investigations into notions of human place and of belonging, and caring as we do for things, we speak and see from out of our own unique be-longing.<sup>279</sup>

Situating the works side by side in this way aims to draw comparisons across space and time. Through investigating the acute penetration of the artists' attention to history and memory, and their use of technology, correlations between the works, and how they traverse the uneven adjacencies of space, place and site begins to materialise as mutual artistic concerns, drawing more clearly SOMII's collective impact in the field of moving image installation.

## Sound Ears

*Sound Ears* by Tacita Dean, shown at Tate Modern in the spring of 2001, reveals an interesting position in that it sits between Ranciere's notions of the metaphorical image and the naked documentary image.<sup>280</sup>

Ranciere determines that through connecting images metaphors may be both visualised and imagined, existing as much visible as invisible. He deals with the content of any artistic medium, but here, in relation to the moving image, may be understood as having an unspoken aesthetic quality, separate but also intrinsically related to images' flatness. In this way the viewer response to image stimulus submits as much to any aesthetic values, as it does to its

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<sup>279</sup>Ranciere J, (2007) p.24 and also p.26. This also shares space with Chapter Three.

<sup>280</sup>Ranciere J, (2007) p.24.

documentary nature.

During the paranoia of interwar years (between 1927 and 1930), the Ministry of Defence designed and built Sound Mirrors as part of Britain's national defence strategy. Their aim was to pick up sound of approaching enemy aircraft from across the coast, thereby giving Britain a fifteen-minute warning of attack. In theory, the mirrors succeeded, but in practice, the variety of sound was difficult to decipher and thus aircraft could be an enemy Zeppelin or a British Spitfire. The technology had failed and the project was scrapped.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 38. Sound Mirrors at Dungeness  
[www.minimalexposition.blogspot.com/2009/08/acoustic-sound-mirrors.html](http://www.minimalexposition.blogspot.com/2009/08/acoustic-sound-mirrors.html)  
 Image retrieved September 09.

Since World War II the mirrors have lain disused like giant coastal ears, slowly crumbling back into the landscape of the MOD sites on which they stand. More recently English Heritage has become involved in their restoration. Artists and writers have long been interested in these sites of near history, such as Paul Virilio, Anselm Kiefer, Erasmus Shroeter, and in 1999 Tacita Dean made a film

installation '*Sound Mirrors*', filmed at such a site close to Hythe in Kent. She used 16mm black and white film to negotiate the site, running it through a film projector at the site of the installation. Dean recorded the sound ambient to the 200ft 'listening' wall erected on the same site, thus it was both of the site as well as an echo or trace of the structures' original function.<sup>281</sup>

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 39. Dean Tacita, *Sound Ears* (2001) Royoux Jean-Christophe, Warner Marina and Greer Germaine. Tacita Dean. 2005. New York and London. Phaidon Press Ltd.

The old projector positioned on a plinth in the installation space chugs through the film, mechanically spewing the images onto the opposing wall. The grey installation space admits the room's architecture, somehow symbiotic (in the above picture) with the film itself. The projector sound seems to animate the space but

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<sup>281</sup> See Practice Documentation N.P.D.07.

surprisingly it does not create an obvious reading of cinema's construction and artifice.<sup>282</sup>

Using flat, evenly lit observational shots of the abandoned techno-archeology, she maps a tour of the site over seven minutes. Adrian Searle described it as a '*terribly somnolent film of an equally melancholic place*', likening it to Bernd and Hilla Becher's industrial photographs, which although comparative in that they both reference the *naked image* of the documentary, defies any sense of experiencing the sensation of the installation - the being in-ness of Dean's work.<sup>283</sup>

The lens work speaks of personal interaction within the site through the hand held nature of filming, which itself addresses the monumental architecture of the subject. The black and white images are an obvious association with cinematic/historic time in which the architecture was built, and as such are sympathetic to the ruins. In this way, technology openly combined with medium is used to push at the less equivocal characteristics of collective memory.

Through these concerns an indeterminate quasi political space emerges, not unlike Warhol's *Empire*, indicating that although such an installation is site oriented, its limits are beyond the immediate givens, raising questions as to where, how and why an artist engages with sites historic specificities.

In the following SOMII differing modes of engagement are investigated, the works share many common characteristics, not necessarily in the technological methods embedded in their practice but in the way they empathetically encounter site's historical presence.

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<sup>282</sup> Frieze Magazine. Issue 31 November-December 1996 retrieved 10/4/2009.

<sup>283</sup> Searle A, (2001). *The Guardian*. February 20<sup>th</sup>.



## Ghost Story

*'The place carries in it this burden of significance.'*<sup>284</sup>

Willie Doherty's *Ghost Story*, A single screen SOMII, carries with it an inseparable unity of memory and place, filmed in Derry, on a stretch of road that is infamous as a place of violent death.<sup>285</sup>

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 40. Doherty Willie, *Ghost Story* (2007) 15mins colour, sound, Image courtesy of Matts Gallery.

The single projected image in the black space of the gallery shows a country lane, captured by the lens of a steady-cam. It moves slowly forward. There are trees and shrubs on both sides of the path suggesting common land, obscuring the view to either side and adding to the path's visual intensity. The narrative makes reference to forgotten images, recalled momentarily by the male Irish brogue that softly intones throughout the fifteen-minute film.

Remembered place surfaces in this context, as an imaginative affect for the artist to investigate through the use of optical and narrative

<sup>284</sup> Doherty W, Curated by Mulholland Hugh. Catalogue published on the occasion of 52. *Exposizione Internazionale d'arte. Event collaterali*. p13.

<sup>285</sup> Shown as part of *Replays: Selected video works 1994-2007* at Matts Gallery London (2008) and recently purchased by the Tate.

devices. Site in this situation, absorbs place into its pores, a priori knowledge saturates and is saturated by sites indistinguishable facets. This site could be identified as contingent landscape identified by Le Feuvre as *placescapes*, which can be viewed in this work in the way that the image of the country road becomes less important than the historical/political importance of the location, and thus the referent (as Simon Shama predicted) becomes seemingly more real than the reality of the image.<sup>286</sup>

Specific site in this work is a road, not just any by-way, but a remembered place inhabited by recalling and re-visioning. Doherty labours in the border-land between private and public memory, recalling personal narratives, political news stories and picture clippings. The images are predicated on a physical and imaginative fluidity; one that releases towards a transient space - space-time as a flowing encounter realised as a quasi, out of body, continuous journey/experience through the same looped site.<sup>287</sup>

The voiceover heightens an anxiety that seemingly lurks beneath the moving image surface:

*'I wondered about what had happened to the pain and terror that had taken place there'* (v/o)

The sky hangs leaden in the 'v' of the far perspectival horizon, a milky white inversion of the road. Both road and narrator are in all ways *'everywhere and nowhere'* travelling forwards by piecing together a fractured, disembodied journey of movement, pressing ever onwards.

*'His body was discovered...'* (v/o)

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<sup>286</sup> Whittaker E. Catalogue. *The Contingent Landscape*. Introductory Essay. Lisa Le Feuvre, see also Schama S, (1996). p61.

<sup>287</sup> Bourriard N, (2009) pp184-185.

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 41. Doherty Willie, *Ghost Story*. (2007). 15mins colour, sound,  
Image courtesy of Matts Gallery, London.

The shot extends and keeps moving, but getting nowhere. The feeling of apprehension grows in the slow camera movement, overtly referencing camera work in psychological thriller films.

*'The smell of ancient mould mingled with the creeping odour of dead flesh.'* (v/o)

The voice over speaks of: wraiths, ghosts, shapes and colours. The scene shifts; a jump cut to another narrow road, but this one has architectural structures either side instead of bushes.

The camera carries on moving down the centre of the road, and the 'steadycam' forces the image to drift echoing the movement of a wraith.

The image/lens of the camera travels round a corner, a youth leans against the wall, waiting... for what? The image is edited back to the path again, bushes and trees either side. Now the voice tells of mould, stench and wraiths.

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 42. Doherty Willie, *Ghost Story*. (2007) 15 minutes, Colour, sound.  
Single screen installation. Image courtesy of Matts Gallery, London.

Death hangs metaphorically in the air, framing strange and difficult thoughts and incidents provoked by the broken narrative. Thoughts that are exacerbated by the continuous and barely edited shots.

The viewer is thus embodied in the act of remembering but to be embodied *'is ipso facto to assume a particular perspective and position: it is to have not just a point of view but a place in which we are situated'* <sup>288</sup>

In this installation the viewers' position is altered, aligned to place and also to 'journey-through'. 'Being in' in this situation means travelling through, thus the lens of the camera through continuous forward movement of the steadycam, prevails upon the viewer to join with the voiceover, as it tracks disembodied along the omnipresent lane.

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<sup>288</sup> Casey Edward S, (2000). p182.

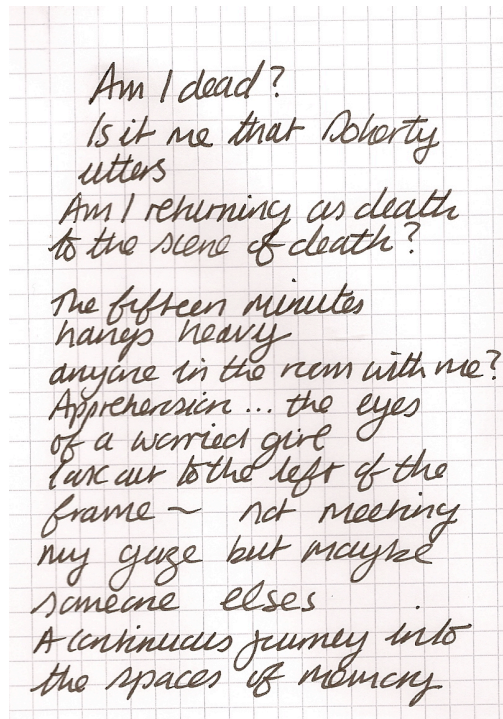


Figure 43. From notebook. Michele Whiting (2007)

*Ghost Story* in this reading is not considered an analogy for the cycle of life, but an analogy for a cycle of death. Site does not merely become a site of memory but a journey in which the body of the wraith is encountered as viewer. An exchange takes place, in other words, the viewer takes on the mantle of wraith.

The wraith is also metaphor for the horror of 1972's 'Bloody Sunday'. Declan Lang, (in an essay from the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale), explores relations between: image, narrative and the history that it alludes to.

*'Ghost Story keeps us suspended between text and image, between now and then, and between the visible and the invisible.'*<sup>289</sup>

I would argue that, the suspension that Lang referred to occurs because of the attachment of the viewer to the physical effect of

<sup>289</sup> From an Essay 'Invisible Matter' in a catalogue that accompanied the Northern Irish Participation in the collateral event of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale.p18.

journey (not noted by Lang). Doherty's combined use of steadycam so deftly entwined with the voiceover, impels the viewer into the wraith position, thus senses are heightened to acknowledge now and then...visible and invisible, in body and out of body.

By using the spectral steadycam movement, the viewers' gaze embodies 'the being' of the image. In other words the viewer becomes poetic wraith, journeying through this land of painful memories, to see again beyond the ready surface of the image.

The architecture of the dark installation is deliberate, and according to Robin Klassnick, (curator at Matts Gallery where I was witness) it is highly prescriptive in its development. Doherty insisted on the darkened space to show *Ghost Story*, in order to precipitate the internal tension felt by viewers in that space. There were in fact two small rooms, both with a seating area. The films were part of a programme and both spaces screened works that spanned the years. Doherty insisted on a black space as opposed to a grey space.

It is hard to write about Doherty's work without paying some attention to his biography. Much of his work is located in his Irish roots. Born in Derry, Northern Ireland in 1959, Doherty uses the lens to exclaim on the despair of the struggles. Earlier works include *The Only Good One Is A Dead One* (1993) with the motif of a path and undergrowth, this time on a sunny afternoon, with long shadows prompting contradictory thoughts - painfully mellow.

Catherine Elwes says of Doherty's video-works: *'The work rides on common knowledge of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland, but it also opens up levels of projection and imaginative understanding which dry news reports fail to illuminate.'*<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Elwes C, (2005) p177.

Ireland's troubles through the intensely focused gaze of this artist, have over the years become inscribed within his works, hence an expectation that socio-political subject matter will be alluded to, and thus Doherty pushes at the painful condition of being human, in the same way as the reader has witnessed earlier in chapter three.

Undoubtedly, Willie Doherty's '*philosophies of anguish*'<sup>291</sup> turn to the visual activity of ephemeral imagination, which he uses to engage with Ireland's past. His landscapes show Ireland's beauty and historical poignancy; the viewer (through shared cultural knowledge) is constantly reminded of the undercurrents that lurk beneath the beautiful surface. Simon Schama writing about projected imagination explains:

*'...it should be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision, establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories of making metaphors more real than their referents: of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery.'*<sup>292</sup>

We can think about this in relation to places such as the underpass at the scene of Princess Diana's death, or a remote battlefield in France.

Themes of history and memory have continued to inhabit the slipstream of moving image work, with artists producing seminal works in their specific field such as non-narrative, impressionistic documentary, adopted by the Black Audio Film Collective in *Handsworth Songs* (1986) shown as recently as 2006 at Tate Liverpool.

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<sup>291</sup> Bachelard G, (1994) pp220-222.

<sup>292</sup> Schama S, (1996) p61.

Other works have grown out of specific explorations of archives including Ansuman Biswas's 'Season' 2006.<sup>293</sup> Biswas investigated the South West Film and Television Archive during a residency at Dartington Hall, culminating in a four-screen video installation; it is a '*set of balanced dualities ...including images from East and West, of past and present, of science and superstition, of bodily labour and the industrious machine.*'<sup>294</sup>

The moving image was screened onto four muslin drapes hung from the ceiling to form a loose square shape. The combination of material and assembled footage lent itself to a domesticised, intimate reading that denied notions of any geographical binary divide.

Imagined archives come into existence through notions of *remembered* place. Susan Hiller, through carefully constructed film clips, assumed an unknown history of Bristol in a two channel DVD Installation, *Psychic Archeology* (2005) which focussed on a little understood Jewish Community in Bristol prior to Edward 1<sup>st</sup>'s reign in 1290. The archive was of her construction, but '*one that has a commonality with that of the viewer - our own cinematic archive, our own cultural knowledge and understanding.*'<sup>295</sup> In this way, remembered place, through myth and shared histories, is enacted through the collectivist activity of archiving film fragments.

Moving image has embedded itself in human conscience. It is readily recalled, prompted by real time events. Victor Burgin's journey to Bristol was punctured by fragments of remembered film from his younger days, *Listen to Britain* (1942) prompted by views from a train of the Avon and Somerset countryside. '*...on the train to Bristol I experienced the involuntary recall of her image, and others, from a shared history of British Cinema.*'<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> shown at A Bond Bristol, commissioned as part of *Ghosting*, Bristol 2006.

<sup>294</sup> Connarty J, and Lanyon J, (2006) p74.

<sup>295</sup> Connarty J, and Lanyon J, (2006) p102.

<sup>296</sup> Burgin V, (2004) p21.



Burgin's radical, but very real perspective on remembered and fractured moving image, was culled from contemporary culture, and examines the fleeting role of fragments that inhabit our perceptions of everyday life. In this sense it underscores a visual, contemporary and key question of how human presence leaves its indelible mark on place.

Filmic associations to place can be seen in interdependent relationships that form collectively through films' global dissemination. Witness the recent phenomena of '*Mamma Mia*' in Skopelos, Greece or '*Captain Correlli's Mandolin*' in Kefalonia, thus attesting to Ranciere's model that the *metaphorical image* used within the 'imageness' of moving image is based on *a postulate of indiscernibility*. Fragments remain in memory. Shards of '*Sequence-images*' that in affecting place are transposed onto and into the real time view. As such, filming in specific geographic sites can often become an act of mediation between: what is real, it's referents and what is imagined.<sup>297</sup>

These partial views apparent in SOMII are in all of these circumstances, nevertheless texts on humanity, which often press on something beyond the actual, beyond the visible, effectively and forever distancing themselves from the documentary.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Burgin V, (2004) p21, this was also something that I experienced especially when making *Coast*, six short minutes.

<sup>298</sup> Kwon M, (2002) p15. See also Ranciere J, p27.

## The Forest

*'Sacred places are sites of paradoxical power-of-destruction, and also of renewal. They can induce a sense of both serenity and terror. Such places are terrible, yet fascinating.'*<sup>299</sup>

*The Forest*, Ori Gersht's thirteen minute looped single large-scale video projection has a very particular set of geographic, historic and highly personal references.

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Figure 44. Gersht Ori. *The Forest* (2005) Image from the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition. The Photographers Gallery. London. November-December 2005.

It was made in 2005 in dense woodland situated in Moskolovka. The forest is close to Kolomyia in the Ukraine. Gersht chose to make moving image work in this location because of his strong familial connections with the place and its past (akin to the artists in Chapter 3). It was there that Gersht's relatives fled and survived the Nazi persecution during WWII. However, this chapter does not focus on these relationships but on strategies and camera tactics used to visually articulate resonance within such a place.

Shown at The Photographers Gallery, (London 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005-31<sup>st</sup> December 2005). *The Forest* is positioned alongside a photographic body of work selected from a series entitled

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<sup>299</sup> Bishop C, (1989) p10.

*Liquidation*, consisting of photographs created during several journeys into remote regions of the South-Western Ukraine, begun in January 2005. The images show blurred, uncertain landscapes, some almost unreadable as anything other than the mildest of colours smeared across a surface.

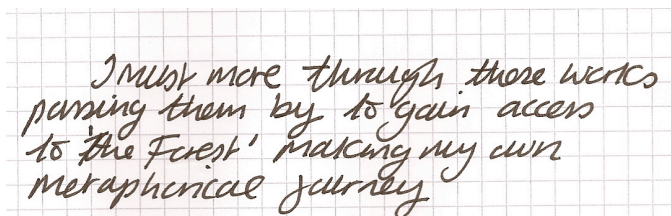


Figure 45. From notebook Michele Whiting (2005)

The photographs' almost vacant meaninglessness, prompts notions of absence, loss and historical associations aligned to the very idea of liquidation, the Holocaust, and Ori Gersht's personal part in the history of the region. In this way, viewing 'The Forest' has, from the outset become contingent on visually prompted and situated knowledge internalised. This witness account is partial, fractured and contingent. *The Forest* cannot be viewed in isolation away from these outside influences. Place in this situation is shattered, disembodied and circumstantial.

The moving image installation is shown as a single screen video projection in a darkened room with a single bench as seating. The distance from bench to screen allows for a light spill to fall onto the shiny floor, partially reflecting the film, but not the viewer.

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Figure 46. Gersht Ori. *The Forest*. 2005. Image from The Catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, at The Photographers Gallery. London. November-December (2005)

The image in the dark space (greyer than the space of *Ghost Story*) is of a dense forest. Gersht's forest represents dual concepts of horror and refuge. It is a borderless, contingent landscape, a 'placescape'<sup>300</sup> that alludes to interlaced concerns of place, landscape and memory, akin to Doherty's *Ghost Story*, and has its contingency in memory. Knowledge and power are seen to become indivisible in such spaces, reflecting this site and its cultural contexts inseparability.

The lens frame is focused on tree-trunks mid-section. There are no visual reference points, nothing to tell scale, direction or intended scope of the moving image. Because of this, the viewer is engulfed into an uncertain perceptual space - literally forced to engage with the camera movements, which at this initial level, is also akin to Doherty's lens work.<sup>301</sup>

Familial connections submerge under the emotional impact of the image, then emerge in the excessive pan of the lens that slowly and elegantly moves across the breadth of the 'placescape', as an: *'...emotionally charged encounter with this unfamiliar yet endlessly evocative landscape is combined with a discreet but equally personal rite of observance'*.<sup>302</sup>

Unease, fear and anxiety, undeniably and knowingly surface in Gersht's filming methods as undercurrents that can be interpreted...

*'...we see a pan glide with a shamed grace across the scene, regardless of what occurs before it, the resounding fall of a tree or the dappling of light across leaves and branches...Gersht's steadily moving camera is not indicative of lack of compassion...but rather an*

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<sup>300</sup> Le Feuvre Lisa, (2000) *The Contingent Landscape*, an essay that accompanied the photographs by Edward Whittaker in the catalogue of the same name. Gallerie Bodinslund, Bollebyd. Sweden.

<sup>301</sup> I have investigated this strategy in the making of *Percipere*, See Practice Documentation E.P.P.D.12-14.

<sup>302</sup> Millar J, (2005) p17.

*acknowledgement of the extremity of the catastrophe of human experience...*<sup>303</sup>

The pan becomes an eye, slowly casting itself across the forest site, taking stock in a measured unhurried way. The artist subtly re-enforces his personal position as moving closer to the '*complete*' or true '*witness*',<sup>304</sup> intimating both a heightened perception of forest and his own empathetic personal involvement.

Through the tree branches, the sky becomes partially visible, and is lost again. It is not possible to find the horizon and yet it becomes part of imagination. The need to search for a horizon is perhaps something of a universal yearning, searching for something that is needed to register one's place in the world, it is about looking for someone or something. No horizon cynically intimates no new beginning. It is about scanning, as camera work scans. And it is metaphorical of a new beginning, which is plainly negated here by its very absence, thus illustrating the carefully considered framing properties of Gersht's camera work.<sup>305</sup>

During the sequence trees begin to fall - a few fall from outside the frame into view. No humans are visible due to the camera's position. The trees seem to fall of their own accord. There is no apparent predictability or pattern to the falling, and all this time the camera slowly sweeps the scene. When the movement sequence reaches its limits, the lens pans slowly back in the opposite direction. This is in reality a 'tracking shot' through which restrained speed evokes the rhythm and control of a slow ceremonial march.

Sound is carefully manipulated. Some trees fall without noise, silently slipping away. Others crash with a sound felt deep in the belly of the viewer, like thunder; a rumbling note that resonates long after the

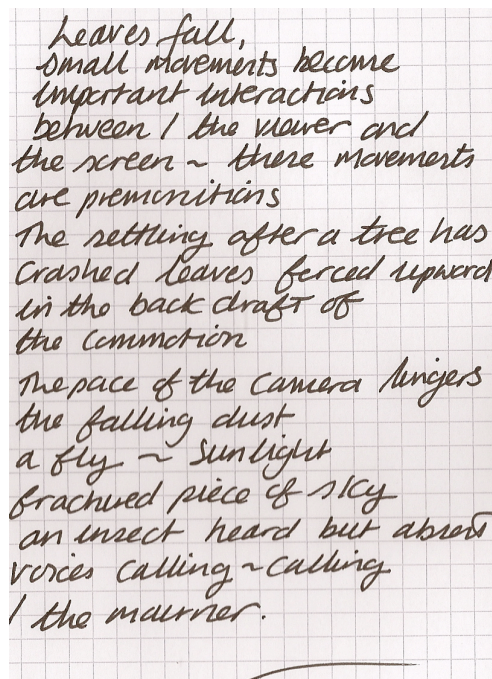
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<sup>303</sup> Millar J, (2005) p17.

<sup>304</sup> Millar J, (2005) p17-18.

<sup>305</sup> See Practice Documentaion E.C.P.D.01.

sound has ceased. Quietude becomes tangible after a crash. The manipulation of sound is as purposeful as the manipulation of the image's construction, calibrated to create an emotional condition that seeps out from within the work's internal architecture, resonating within the viewers' body, who become-as the vitality of their own existence.



Leaves fall,  
small movements become  
important interactions  
between / the viewer and  
the screen ~ these movements  
are premonitions  
The settling after a tree has  
crashed leaves forced upward  
in the back draft of  
the commotion  
The pace of the camera lingers  
the falling dust  
a fly ~ sunlight  
fractured piece of sky  
an insect heard but absent  
voices calling ~ calling  
/ the manner.

Figure 47. From notebook. Michele Whiting (2005)

Filmed with a crew and with the aid of the region's foresters, 'The Forest' unflinchingly observes, seemingly without remark, the artist also observes via the smooth tracking device of the camera. In this situation the gliding pan shot (that laterally sweeps the forest), removes the artist through technology, as opposed to hand held camera work that infers involvement. This technique intimates the artist's involvement as outside of place.

To view the location of the forest as a site away from notions of place is complex and unwieldy. Site does not work in the same way or have the same attributes as place. In the circumstance of this SOMII

they are enmeshed and interchangeable with each other through memory. However, site may be seen as becoming re-asserted through technology, for example: the use of the steady-cam 'pan' used to produce moving image that knowingly relies on a complex set of shared knowledge harboured in the viewers' imagination.<sup>306</sup> Thus the artist implies his position as 'outside' the forest through choices made in apparatus, whose output may be witnessed as a fictive bridge to actual site and its multiple meanings, moving it firmly beyond documentary.<sup>307</sup>

In Lisa Le Feuvre's terms, *The Forest* as a 'placescape' undergoes a shift from a distant view to one that is understood through significant historical events associated with a specific location that ties the viewer to them. By understanding how viewing 'The Forest' touches collective memory, Gersht has chosen to position his edits, views and audio '*...at the point where individual meets collective, and psychic meets social.*'<sup>308</sup> In this sense, experience - felt as reflected - comes from: remembered images, films, photographs, documentary footage, the written and spoken words that inhabit the viewer, thus it need not come directly or solely from site or any iconic image of itself as in Warhol's *Empire*.

The footage is such that alongside the slow pace of the film, it is possible to comprehend the value of time contained in the work. For the informed viewer it transports us, from Nazism and concentration camps towards the romantic German woodlands of Casper David Friedrich, thus demonstrating the contested nature of forest and differing layers of implication contained within our viewing of it.<sup>309</sup>

The forest is undeniably beautiful, referencing notions of the historicised views of landscape. The vertical trunks bisect the screen

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<sup>306</sup> Casey E, S, (2000).

<sup>307</sup> Le Feuvre, L, in Whittaker E, (1999).

<sup>308</sup> <http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/en/pres/compress/memoire/lavabre.htm> retrieved 9/12/05.

<sup>309</sup> Cited in many texts, including Millar (2005), Searle (2005). See also Practice Documentation E,C.M.I.01.

from top to bottom, rendering a feeling of visual symmetry, which is spoiled by the felling of the trees thus undoing the forest's beauty.

Elaine Scarry equates symmetry in aesthetics to justice: *'Here symmetry remains key, particularly in accounts of distributive justice and fairness as a symmetry of everyone's relation to one another'*<sup>310</sup>

To spoil the symmetry and beauty of the forest within the image frame is to remark on contingent injustice heeded within understanding site specificities. In re-situating the film as a looped installation, Gersht is in fact re-remarking over and over again, thus accumulating through time, a sense of place as memorial within the installation. *'Beauty as a memorial can through time become internal to its meaning'*.<sup>311</sup> In this sense positioning the installation as memorial, relies on collective memory - a collective memory that is activated by the work's visual aesthetic; the injustice of the forest serves as a poignant reminder of the horror that was witnessed within it. From the point of view of watching the single screen installation, collective memory thus becomes tangible as:

*'...embodied existence opens onto place, indeed takes place in place and nowhere else, so our memory of what we experience in place is likewise place-specific...'*<sup>312</sup>

The fractured and therefore partial view held imaginatively by the viewer becomes fixed, in bringing the placescape of *The Forest* into the gallery/container, the SOMII now becomes place as a container of experiences.<sup>313</sup> In the phenomenology of the imagination, *'sacred places are entrances to paradox.'* They are also bounded by a perimeter. Within the space of 'The Forest', the frame of the moving

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<sup>310</sup> Scarry, E, (1999) pp98-99.

<sup>311</sup> Danto A, C, (2003) writing about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, *The Abuse Of Beauty. Aesthetics and The Concept of Art*. Illinois, U.S.A. Open Court Publishing Company. Chapter 1.

<sup>312</sup> Casey E, S, (2000) p182.

<sup>313</sup> Casey E, S, (2000) p182.



image becomes both the work's perimeter and the viewer's threshold, thus showing itself as container of experience.<sup>314</sup>

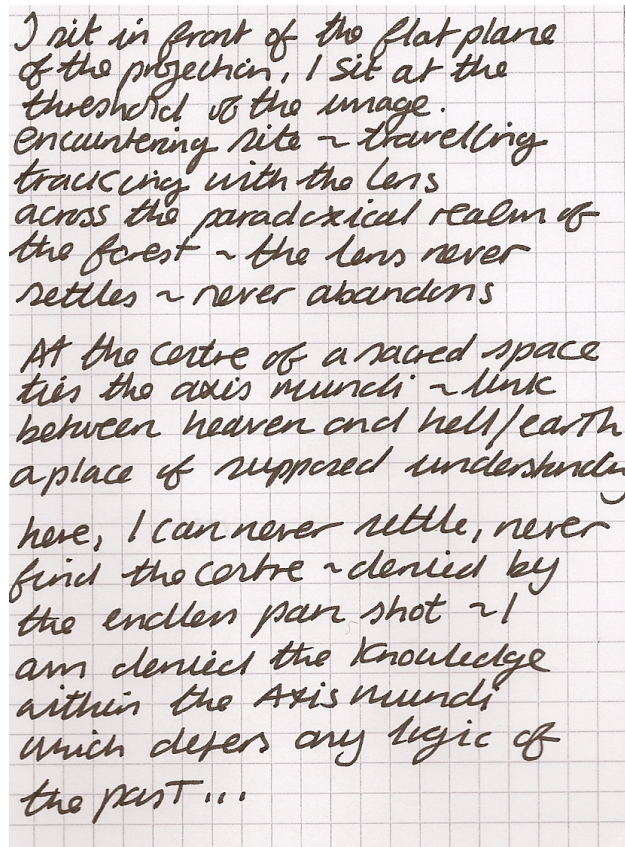
The viewer becomes mourner held in memory.

Investigating these concerns Gersht may be described as involved with site's multilayered 'activities', inserting himself (as artist) into the proximity of a specific area that is, after all, defined by its historical events. He insinuates through carefully considered framing, a blurring of reality between forest past and present, which positions itself below the surface of the actual image. In doing so moving image contemplates profound relationships between people and specific geographic sites. For the artist to achieve this s(he) must move silently between temporal boundaries, which calls for historical awareness and an understanding of the network of information, or in de Certeau's terms: signs that flow through specific site. Not to be confused with notions of nostalgia, but clearly an identifiable set of images that push at perceptual sensors situated near the cultural, 'conscious' surface of the viewer as an internal geographic space where metaphorical associations can be bought to the senses.

Nancy Princenthal in *'Art in America'* (2006) stated that to *'make a film about trees falling in a forest is to risk both the sophomoric and the maudlin'*. Ori Gersht demonstrates through careful handling of filming methods, that he is able to remind the viewer of horror without risking a descent into clichéd notions of the abject.

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<sup>314</sup> Bishop P, (1989). p215.



I sit in front of the flat plane  
 of the projection, I sit at the  
 threshold of the image.  
 Encountering site ~ travelling  
 tracing with the lens  
 across the paradoxical realm of  
 the forest ~ the lens never  
 settles ~ never abandons  
  
 At the centre of a sacred space  
 lies the axis mundi ~ link  
 between heaven and hell/earth  
 a place of supposed understanding  
 here, I can never settle, never  
 find the centre ~ denied by  
 the endless pan shot ~ I  
 am denied the knowledge  
 within the Axis mundi  
 which defers any logic of  
 the past...

Figure 48. From notebook Michele Whiting (2005)

'At its perimeter lies the threshold...this is the limit, the boundary,  
 the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds - and at the  
 same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate,  
 where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes  
 possible'<sup>315</sup>

It is clear that Gerscht has opened up the flows and pathways of the  
 past and present that are the event of site, in so doing, he became  
 (as Millar indicated) close to Primo Levis' 'complete witness'. Gerscht  
 achieved this through careful camera work, editing, and considering  
 affects in relation to both site and viewer.<sup>316 317</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Eliade Mercea, *The Sacred and The Profane*,  
 cited in Bishop P, (1989) p25.

<sup>316</sup> Millar J, (2005) p17.

<sup>317</sup> Kwon M, (2004).

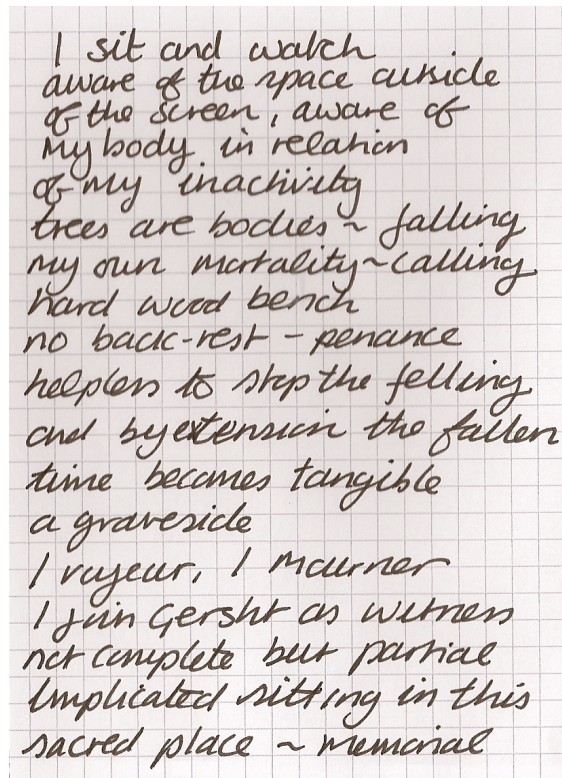


Figure.49.From notebook Michele Whiting (2005)

### **Coast, six short minutes.**

**To follow my process please go to Practice Documentation, East. E.C.P.D.01-9 plus photo/stills and moving image.**

Considering complex aspects of contingent site, *Coast, six short minutes* (2007) embraces notions of becoming being fully implicated, through process strategies of becoming witness - in the sense of attempting to allow the site in all of its senses to be experienced - to the coastline of Slapton Sands, South Hams, Devon. The immense stretch of beach retains absence, and the poetic oceanic horizon, coupled with the emptied historic beach/battlefield, is, as Paul Virillio rightly interprets '*..anything but a secondary experience; it is ...an event in conciousness of underestimated consequences.*'<sup>318</sup>

<sup>318</sup> Virilio P, (1994) p9.

Virillio's fascination with Bunker Archaeology came through experiencing the convergence between the reality of the structures and their geographical position of facing the great void of the ocean. And it was at this point that his awareness of special perception was triggered through being impressed by his own external and internal feelings. And it is towards this duality of feeling that my *SOMII Coast, six short minutes*, positions itself.

This place of my site also has a very specific military, geo-history, a dynamic geography, where history is crucial to its understanding and understanding crucial to its history. During World War II, thirteen villages in the area were requisitioned and effectively sealed off. Allied troops rehearsed D-Day landings on Slapton beach. The geomorphology of the land echoed the proposed landing beaches in France (in particular Utah beach). Secret rehearsal manoeuvres took place, and one night a huge loss of life was incurred, due to enemy interception. The manoeuvre was called 'Operation Tiger'. The enemy never realised what they had stumbled upon.

The loss of life was catastrophic. Between 742-900 American troops were later buried hastily in a farmer's field, and the whole episode kept quiet, buried along with the bodies.<sup>319</sup> As modest witness in the site, I felt compelled to expose visually imaginative layers sensed when I spent time there. This position allows for observation to develop beyond mere ocular perception, permitting simultaneously, fictive and literal interpretations. I became implicated within site, admitting my 'situated-ness' into the imagery. I allowed dominance of remembered imagery to subsume the geographic space, visually echoing the vital words of Simon Shama that '*Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected...*'<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Small K, (1989).

<sup>320</sup> Shama S, (1996) p.61.

The questions of how we (as artists) consume space, and how we visually experience site became the motivating factors in this work, which explores how landscape is imaginatively consumed. It is influenced by Virilio's text *Bunker Archaeology*, where he explores imaginative, cultural and physical aspects of the Breton Coast, alighting on battlefields and concrete bunkers that in their abandonment, hold strong associations in collective memory. In this way, my role as the modest witness to this contested site also maps 'universes of knowledge, practice and power' by admitting all these influences.<sup>321</sup>

This position arguably allows all that inhabits us, and that we inhabit, some form of parity. In practical terms, it entails compositing factually correct archive material<sup>322</sup> together with found footage and experiential videoing on site. This is then used to evoke rhythm and movement within a relationship that spans: factual site, cultural and imaginative geographic space, witnessed as a process of fully inhabiting, of being in (site).

The six minutes are sustained through slowing down the original footage. I decided on this time frame because it took just six minutes for the nine hundred troops to die in the icy waters. Hence, the time in/of the work became prioritised.

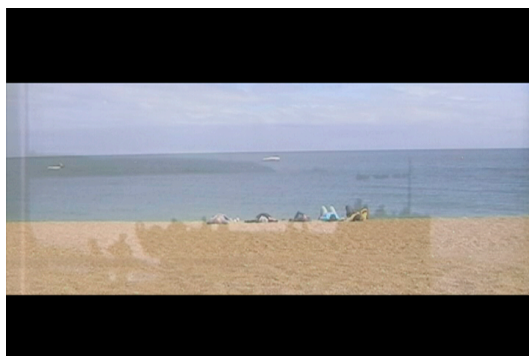
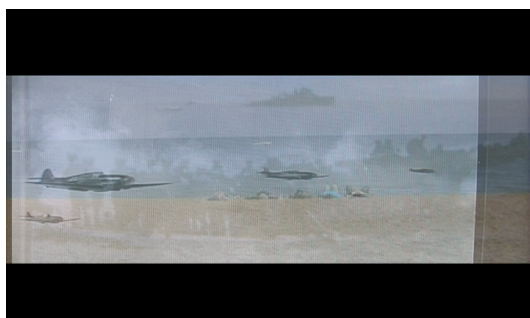


Figure 50. Whiting Michele , *Coast, six short minutes*. (2007). Image stills,

<sup>321</sup> Haraway, D, J. (1997). pp11-12. See also Practice Documentation N.P.D.07.

<sup>322</sup> The work therefore also takes tentative steps to ask questions of archive and cultural memory, where we may (as viewers) temporarily reside from time to time.

Using multiple visual and aural strands provides a link that is more than a mere fragment of history. The work questions the seductive linear nature of narrative film from a position of fractured narrative, opening up space for other interior meanings.



Figures 51. Whiting Michele , *Coast*, six short minutes. (2007) Image stills,

The layering of disparate moving image footage is conceptually important in relation to the overall image composition, and by placing emphasis on it's duration through speed, the archive film footage<sup>323</sup> and the found film<sup>324</sup>, is used as equal witness accounts, layering and gradually subsuming the original footage.

*'...It was clear that Jack Lemmon would get hurt. It was clear that things would turn out disastrously for all concerned. The fragment I saw was all that was required to retrieve this narrative from the archive of the already seen...'*<sup>325</sup>

In this account, Victor Burgin insists that the more distanced a film becomes in time the more its narrative threads are loosened,

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<sup>323</sup> Imperial War Museum archive. London. 2006.

<sup>324</sup> The 1946 movie *A Matter Of Life and Death* starred David Niven and tells the story of a pilot who endures a heavenly trial for his life after he mistakenly survives a plane crash, best remembered for its special effect of a celestial escalator linking earth and the afterlife. The Film was created by legendary British film-makers Powell and Pressburger. In 1956 Kenneth More starred in *Reach for the Skies*, director and screen writer, Lewis Gilbert. This is the famous story of Douglas Bader, RAF Pilot. The Rank, Collection.

<sup>325</sup> Burgin V, (2004) p67.

becoming fragmented particles of information in our own internal archive. Influenced in this way, I found fragments of iconic British WW II films as well as using historical archive material from site. By experimenting with image fragments, layering, cropping and transparency, I slowed down the footage and sound into extreme movement, layering the sound ambient to the clip used, slowing it down to match the image speed, and in places, reducing the speed severely to make another sound that is more haunting in its resonance.

Out of this practice, new visual combinations began to emerge. The edit became a rhythmic exercise, akin to a fugue. The rhythm of the edit also decided the speed of the accompanying seascape, slowing down footage to accentuate the pull or lure of the sea. This is echoed in the sound treatment, enabling a more poetic reading:

*‘...to dwell poetically does not mean to dwell in such a way as one needs poetry, but to dwell with a sensitivity to the poetic, characterised by the impossibility, in a sense, of defining clear cut boundaries between reality and the imagination.’*<sup>326</sup>

The under-image is experiential, filmed with a single fixed point of view camera. There are people sunbathing unaware of the filming, their only action is occasional small body movement. The frame embraces, and holds in its grasp, malleable altered visual material, and a merged viewing or inter-viewing takes place.

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<sup>326</sup> Cited in Çavuşoğlu Ergin, (2007) p9.



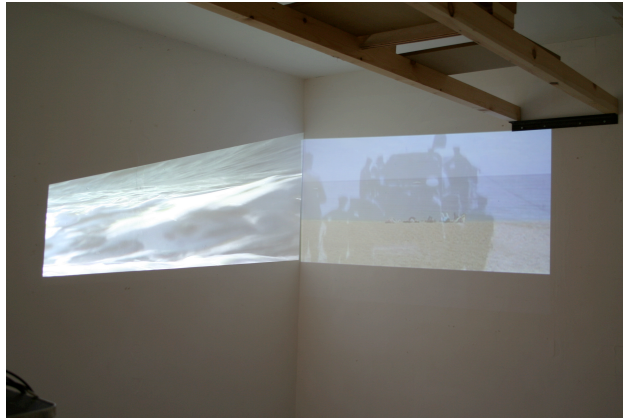


Figure 52. Studio notebooks (2007) Michele Whiting

The image through the use of: transparency, stretching time, layering and re-cropping, rises from a transparent shadow to a crescendo as the under-image is fully enveloped and dissipated, then returned to it's unimagined form. The viewer, in this way, may be coerced into witnessing the site as a space of psychological event.

In the studio, the projection (on the left) is the sea. The insistent roll of the tide continues throughout. The horizon is negated through the crop within camera, any metaphorical hope of better times ahead blocked off. The speed has been altered to accentuate the drag and draw as the tide pulls back, only to crash again on the shore.



Figure 53. Studio notebooks. Michele Whiting (2007)

This gives an impression of threat and power, adding a protension (anticipation) and rhythm to the overall imageness of the installation. The slow rhythmic draw of the sea also pulls the viewer away from



inhibited constraints, allowing a poetic, intensified view to materialise. This is shown in juxtaposition with the second image.<sup>327</sup>

Latterly, a third image has been introduced to the floor of the installation. It shows the field where the fallen soldiers bodies were interred. Fresh green wheat sways in a light breeze. The sound is positioned laterally to the viewing space, which compresses the viewer in a manner that underscores both the insistence of time and imagination in the fluid poetics of place, not unlike the experience of compression in Jane and Louise Wilsons' *Stasi City*.<sup>328</sup>

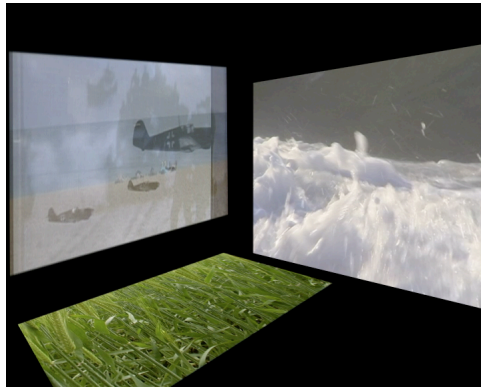


Figure 54. Studio notebook. (2009) Michele Whiting.  
*Coast Six short minutes*. (2008)

## Conclusion.

Throughout the installations experienced in this chapter, it is apparent that the artists' strategic uses of cultural and collective memory aligned to place are used evocatively. The images encountered across the works provoke thought beyond the

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<sup>327</sup> Kossoff A, (2007). p47.

<sup>328</sup> A further note; In witnessing various installations, I have found that the space of the installation is often intensely black- a mechanism for viewing, (as in many of Doherty's works). I aim to install it so that the architecture of the room will be seen in the projection's grey light thus encouraging the architecture of the space to be witnessed as part of a collusion of spaces inherent within the work.

immediately visible, indicating that SOMII's creative principals may reach out to something that comes across as truly essential - linking man to man, sharing ground with the works in chapter three, such as Tait's *Portrait of Ga*, where the artist's mother inscribes the landscape through her physical activity. But these works exude something further: a historical and topological presence, through which visual analogies may be drawn, such as the falling trees in Ori Gersht's forest, analogous to the fallen victims of the Holocaust. This is place as contingent, continually re-defined.

Every image demands a high mental alertness. These images do not appear easy as in the sense of entertainment, but are distinguishable by their precise construction in the frame, both in terms of composition and subject; foregrounding what might first appear to be a relatively straightforward images: Doherty's disappearing horizon, Gersht's full frame of forest tree trunks, or the crop of my own beachscape. In *Coast, six short minutes*, initial images give way to something far more powerful. This is encouraged by the speed used to slow perception, letting associated thoughts gradually surface in the viewers' minds, intensifying experiences through movement internal to the image constructs - the pan of the lens across the forest, or the journey forward of the wraith via steadycam in *Ghost Story*. In *Coast, six short minutes*, this happens because of the motion of the sea and the rhythm of the wheat field in combination with the slow influx of images from the adjoining projection.

All of these moving image works purposefully lead the viewer to a contemplative, internal yet shared place, provoking a singular responsibility that constitutes a communal political moment in the work. This links back to Landy's SOMII and the plight of industrial workers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>329</sup> Thus global concerns manifest from local conditions, underscoring the notion of local as a symptom of global; again a shared concern manifesting across all the works in

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<sup>329</sup> von Drathen D, (2004).

this thesis, strengthening the argument for considering SOMII as an independent entity.

These collected works indicate that the various methods of image making and production are divisive, through which the artists purposefully use techniques to prompt the viewer to join them in their unique perspective, where the viewer becomes more receptive, facilitated by emotional changes bought about through a puncturing of collective memory. In this way, place and site are experienced through the artists' intense focus on the geohistoric site. This extreme view intensifies the experience, referencing sensations felt by the artist at the site of filming, noted in the making of *Coast, six short minutes* and also experienced by the viewer within installations' palpable space. This again demonstrates a correlation noticed through witnessing the works of Gersht and Doherty, and indicating that, once again, SOMIIs' may be witnessed as works of resistance (akin to the works in Chapter Four). Here, they appear as works that utter place, are of place and find their singular formal resolutions through place and its universal contingent nature. It is thus that Massey, Rogoff and Crang are read between the works, sharing a cross platform with the artists in Chapter Three.

Separating these works is the historical presence of site - what may be considered the 'placeness' of site, contingent, laden in the extreme: Ireland's 'troubles', Holocaust memories and English/American wartime catastrophe, each event bitten into the place of its happening. Thus site oriented moving image installations (SOMII) are distanced from documentary space. They inhabit and become part of a particular, collective, aesthetic space of their own - a space so far without a formal name or art movement to guide it, though indicated in this thesis through groupings and observations, where the following chapter is also positioned, which investigates multiple screens created through a critical understanding of the specificities of space, site and place, resonating through the stretch and emplacement of their architecture.

## Chapter 6

### **Multi frame: exploring some ways in which artists use multiple screens/multiple spaces to expose sites' geographies in SOMII.**

*'Our moods, our thoughts, our emotions, our feelings can bring about change here. And we are in no condition to comprehend them. Old traps vanish, new ones take their place; the safe old places become impassable, and the route can either be plain and easy, or impossibly confusing. That's how the Zone is. It may even seem capricious. But in fact, at any moment it is exactly as we devise it, in our consciousness...everything that happens here depends on us, not on the Zone'.<sup>330</sup>*

### **Introduction**

The installations discussed in this last chapter share distinct similarities with the works in chapter four, such as *Esc*, and *This is the Place*, in that the vital impact of the work is felt in mid space between the multiple image planes. Ergin Çavuşoğlu's six screen installation *Point of Departure* (2006), and Melik Ohanian's seven screen *Seven Minutes Before* (2007) are the main focus. These multiple image / multiple screen works are witnessed as disjunctive and conjunctive spaces, continuing the dialogue from the previously discussed SOMII, and indicating that the tension between disjunction and conjunction is experienced across the works in this thesis. As such the works here, both retain a purposely, fractured visual narrative like the image planes of Landy's ballroom. Thus any possible linearity is disrupted, alternative possibilities rise and dissipate, using rupture or fracture to provoke a sense of many

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<sup>330</sup> Aristotle, Cited in Dean T, Millar J, (2005) p11.

stories - both external and internal to the viewer, a position also taken up with my own work *Hollow* (2008).

These works hang on visual frameworks that speak of geographic presence, though separated out from synthetic geographies experienced in Chapter Four because they also pay debt to cinema. Ohanian makes implicit remarks to cinematic images within the visual structures of the work, whilst Çavuşoğlu references the multiplex cinema so that, ergonomically at least, Expanded Cinema continues to be stretched, as can be witnessed in my SOMII *Hollow* - and by positioning them alongside each other, showing how broad the terrain of site-oriented multiple screen moving image works has become.<sup>331</sup>

In order to separate them out (because of their shared tendency towards multiple screens) this chapter will focus on specific aspects of the installations. *Point of Departure* will be explored in terms of sound architecture, paying particular attention to anticipated primary sound and its ability to transcend space, prompting imaginative displacement in the viewer. This is witnessed through aural strategies explored in conjunction with memory as transition, negotiated from the smooth, known space of the gallery into the striated, unknown space of installation.

Ohanian's *Seven Minutes Before* will be investigated with reference to its visual details, exploring a choreographed, fugue-like visual geography. Complex filmic structures witnessed as internal to the image will be examined, aiming to show that the work also references (albeit obliquely) Land Art's early experimental field, incorporating performance, sculpture, and installation - also experienced through my own SOMII *Hollow*. Drawing threads of practice across time, Ohanian's seven-screen installation will be

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<sup>331</sup> Ergin Çavuşoğlu explained his fascination with Multiplex Cinema, and the notion of multiple images in screen format in an artist's talk given at Plymouth University. January 4<sup>th</sup> 2009.

seen to blur any boundary between happening (event) and site, between fact of site and fiction of the image construct, whilst dipping back into histories of art, music, and cinema. *Hollow* is positioned alongside these works, sharing their strategic platforms - multiple screens, performance and simultaneity used to explore the breadth of the site in which it was filmed.

Through exploring these issues, the works will indicate another way forward for the artist practicing the space of site. Like the works in the last chapter, the placeness of site is re-invigorated in the vital space of the installation, thus SOMII will begin to be felt as an entity through witnessing the common bonds of practice iterated through the last chapters and culminating in the complexities of space experienced in this.

### **Outer and Inner Space**

Before the reader moves on to explore these contemporary works, attention is turned backwards in time to an earlier multiple video art form in order to create a backdrop for this complex story. Yvonne Speilmann acknowledges Andy Warhols' *Outer and Inner Space*, (USA, Double Screen Film, 1965, 33:00, b/w, sound) as the 'true birth' of video. - An advent that contemporaneously witnessed the birth of the Sony Corporation's 'Portapak', and the less well-known 'Norelco' which was loaned and used by Warhol for this work. Shown at The Hayward Gallery (2008) London, it is briefly discussed to set the scene for its visionary use of multi-visual techniques, which are witnessed as an early deciphering of installations uneven spaces. As such it can be seen as a forerunner to the works in this chapter.

The split film projection shows a doubling of Edie Sedgwick, spontaneously interacting with herself on a monitor positioned at her side. The image on the screen comes from a pre-recorded videotape

of Sedgwick in a three-quarter body shot. In the image frame, she sits slightly to the front of the monitor and talks to Warhol 'off' camera. The work serves as master-class demonstration of an artist developing a kind of inter-technology through the simultaneous use of concurrent film and video.<sup>332</sup>

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 55. Warhol Andy. *Outer and Inner Space*. (1965) B/W film  
[www.medienkuntsnetz.de/works/outer-and-inner-space/](http://www.medienkuntsnetz.de/works/outer-and-inner-space/)  
 Image retrieved January 09.

It is a careful image-construct, the viewer sees four talking heads, video-film/video-film, projected from two reels of film simultaneously. The monitor image of Sedgwick, captured on film in video playback, is a complex spacial experiment with multiple moving images. By splicing the two-reel film together to make one projection, Warhol amassed a quadruple, simultaneous portrait of Edie Sedgwick that sustains for thirty-two minutes across a complex spacial divide.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Andy Warhol, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. Hayward Gallery. London. October 08 - January 09.

<sup>333</sup> See excerpt on 'YouTube' Jan09.

Calle Angell, in an introduction to a screening of Andy Warhol's 1965 double screen film, explained that the '*complex physical structure of this film works as an image for its complex thematic structure as well.*'<sup>334</sup> This single characteristic, regardless of its subject matter being rooted in portraiture, shares ground with many of the contemporary SOMII that I have witnessed as part of this research. Structure as strategy has obvious implications within Structuralist Filmmakers' work, as does the notion of '*structure as image*' that indicates these works as processes in which *imageness* and *structure* are symbiotic and inseparable with the specific sites of their enquiry. In this way, structure-as-image has been conceptually retained at the heart of this witness experience.<sup>335</sup>

## Stasi City

*'If space is rather a simultaneity of stories so far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space.'*<sup>336</sup>

Chronologically fast forwarding to Jane and Louise Wilson's *Stasi City* (1997, 29' multichannel colour projection with sound), two double wall projections that, when projected, are spacially opposite each other. The subject matter of the installation is the vacant headquarters of East German secret police, known locally as Stasi City. The images structural similarity to (and possibly feeding from) Warhol's *Outer and Inner Space*, surfaces through the installation's architecture.

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<sup>334</sup> curator of the Andy Warhol Film Project at the Whitney Museum New York, at the film showing of *Outer and Inner Space*, at the Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2000.

<sup>335</sup> A strategy that I have tested out in both *Hollow* and *Pecipere*. See Practice Documentation E.H.P.D.0. and E.P.P.D.01.

<sup>336</sup> Massey D. (2005) p130.



The four screen video installation shows two looped moving image projections, each of five minutes duration. The camera work uses a slow pan, which, in a similar vein to Doherty, glides eerily along the vacant corridors of the Nazi headquarters, detailing filing systems, lighting, the mundane reality of the site. The twin loops are shown simultaneously on opposite sides of the room, and slightly out of synch. The effect is one of spacial displacement, pre-configured and pre-determined within the image structure of the installation.

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 56. Wilson, Jane and Louise. *Stasi City* (1997) 29' multichannel colour projection with sound. Image retrieved May 09  
[www.jameswagner.com/mt\\_archives/WilsonJaneLouiseSTASI.jpg](http://www.jameswagner.com/mt_archives/WilsonJaneLouiseSTASI.jpg)

Editing values within the work have been likened (by Jane and Louise Wilson) to Tarkovsky. The works' inherent qualities of time, memory and contingency in place - its *aesthetic texture* - become the logic internal in the image. Repetition, doubling and synching are bound to the imageness, as is the emplacement of the multiple projection.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Tarkovsky A, (1986) pp57-78.

Their focus on the Stasi interior asserts the resonance of contingent site, plays on our (socially collective) paranoia of surveillance and regimes, an essence of which is akin to both Doherty's *Ghost Story* and Gersht's *The Forest*. A ghostly apparition and telekinetic energy bring the journey to a crescendo, only to begin again, like a nightmare that never stops.

Jacques Ranciere identifies the distance between recognition and identification, (albeit referring to the theatre and audience). He defines an adjustment of reality between what we know and what we understand as fiction, we create '*...beings of resemblance...*' to mediate between *here* and *there*, that I believe can be seen in this work touching on a collective nerve that lies below the image surface, acting upon the viewer, in a similar vein to the trees in Ori Gersht's *The Forest*.<sup>338</sup> The viewer, aware of the nightmarish proceedings that took place within its rooms both identifies and is drawn forwards to the image, whilst being repelled by *fear space*.<sup>339</sup> This is instigated by internalized, shared cultural knowledge, in a similar way again to Doherty's *Ghost Story*. The tension that ensues is the works platform. The SOMII surrounds the viewer on all four walls. The editing of images, and subtle out of synch running speeds, forces a constant negotiation of gallery space in order to fully comprehend the images in peripheral vision. Thus the viewer becomes integral to visual structures, surrounded and vitally compressed by the images' intimidating scale and visual content. And this singular emotional element is what distinguishes it from the works in the previous chapter.

The term 'compression' here indicates how the viewer is overwhelmed by scale, deftly reflecting the psychological states akin to fear that the Stasi Police engendered among ordinary citizens, engineered by the artists' attention to history, cultural sensitivity and

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<sup>338</sup> Ranciere J, (2007) p116-119.

<sup>339</sup> Tuan Yi-Fu, (1999).

scale. They are moved toward inhabiting a similar mental zone of *presence* to the images of piles of luggage and mountains of abandoned shoes that we have come to associate with Nazism and genocide.<sup>340</sup> Both *Outer and Inner Space* and *Stasi City*<sup>341</sup> begin to set the scene in a variety of ways for the complex works that follow, indicating how technology in combination with scale and contingency, may be used to negotiate differing geographies within SOMIIs' structures by the sensitive artist.

### Seven Minutes Before

Melik Ohanian's internationally acclaimed seven-screen installation: '*Seven Minutes Before*,' (2004)<sup>342</sup> has as its premise 2km of valley floor in a remote area of the Vercors Mountains in Southern France. Presented in single screens laterally, again reminiscent of Expanded Cinema, such as Welsby's *Shoreline 1*. The film progresses, and the geographic view travels via multi-camera emplacement upwards towards the high valley.

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 57. Ohanian Melik, *Seven Minutes Before*. (2004) Six Screen, six channels of Sound. [www.southlondongallery.org](http://www.southlondongallery.org) Image retrieved December 08

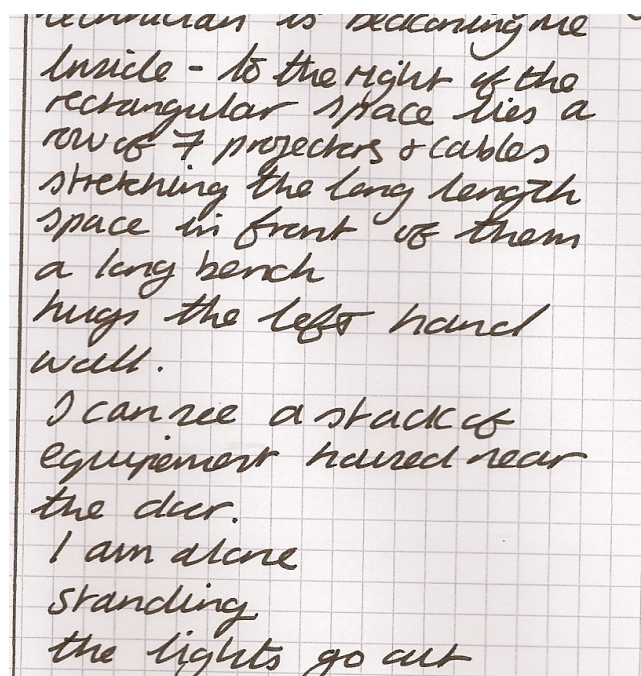
<sup>340</sup> Rogoff I, (2000) pp, 44 and 45. In a different but visually similar way I have tested this strategy in *Percipere*. See Practice Documentation E.P.P.D.13.

<sup>341</sup> In Kossoff's thesis he describes a further work by the Wilsons that uses local familiarity with a specific site to create 'a non narrative mosaic' of filmic surfaces. *A Free and Anonymous Monument* was shown at The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. (2006) Kossoff A, (2007) p101.

<sup>342</sup> shown at The South London Gallery, from 16<sup>th</sup> November-14<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

Each image frame initially appears to tell an individual tale, and is constructed in extra-ordinary detail, describing elliptically a 'free-association' narrative made up of cinematic clichés, art historical references, and romantic symbolism.<sup>343</sup>

The partial narrative begins with the story of a girl whose forty-three horses are mysteriously killed during a thunderstorm and found crushed to death at the bottom of a cliff. From this initial thematic point through to the end, there is no clear linear structure but there exists geographic structure that we realise at the end point of the moving image, as it culminates in a catastrophic accident seen across the span of seven images, wherein a white van and a motorbike crash with some violence, and further on a camper van explodes for no apparent reason. These calamitous incidents seem predicated on an underlying elemental theme of water, fire, earth and rock, which runs viscerally through the underbelly of images.<sup>344</sup>



...curriculum is reckoning me  
 Inside - to the right of the  
 rectangular space lies a  
 row of 7 projectors & cables  
 stretching the long length  
 space in front of them  
 a long bench  
 hugs the left hand  
 wall.  
 I can see a stack of  
 equipment heaped near  
 the door.  
 I am alone  
 standing  
 the lights go out

Figure 58. From Notebooks Michele Whiting (2008)

<sup>343</sup> Artvehicle 4/review (2006), 16<sup>th</sup> November - 22<sup>nd</sup> December,  
<http://www.artvehicle.com/events/210>

<sup>344</sup> Hubbard S, (2006) *The Independent*, London. December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ohanian's method of filming was extreme in its ambition.<sup>345</sup> Each screen represents a single continuous take, made simultaneously to the other cameras, encapsulating within each frame it's own unique drama. The overall image thus metaphorically moves across seven points of the valley, positioned to describe its topology from the river valley bottom, (in which a model city has been constructed,) to the lip of the rising cliff from which the horses plunged.<sup>346</sup> Thus the narrative structure in the moving image is replaced by the topographic structure of the valley. Scenography describes dramatic fairy tale and dream-like events: musicians, mountain streams and caged wolves fill individual screens until each of them holds the one dramatic explosion in its frame.

*'To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate...'*<sup>347</sup>

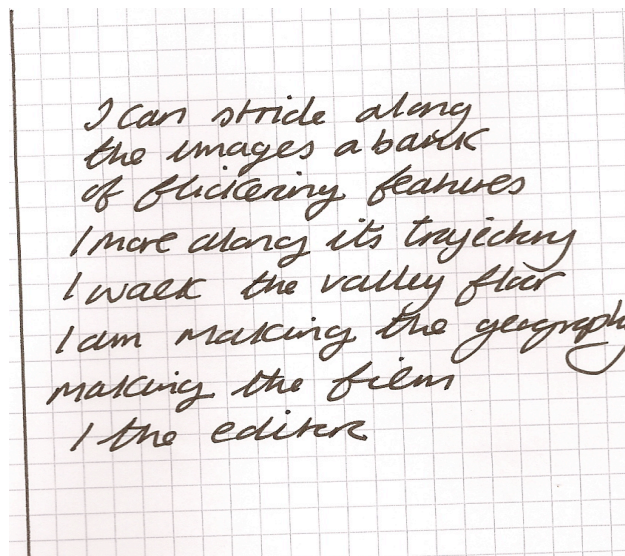


Figure 59. From notebooks Michele Whiting (2008)

<sup>345</sup> In fact it is well documented that the first film had to be abandoned because of technical difficulties.

<sup>346</sup> i.e. the total image across the seven images planes.

<sup>347</sup> Massey D, (2005) p130.

Camera 1, located initially on the valley floor, shows a child constructing a stick building in the river Kwanza. The camera travels along, following the line of river-bed, where there are three white structures on a floating platform - references to Gordon Matta Clarke's '*Splitting*' (1974) and Smithson's '*Spiral Jetty*' (1970). The camera then disappears under the water and we are witness to sub-water explosions. Emerging once more, the camera travels approximately half of the valley floor towards the point of explosion.

Each scene becomes part of the overall poetic logic.<sup>348</sup>

Visual passages become image/time, choreographed and balanced across the whole trajectory of time/space. Each of the seven cameras travels to the explosion as if called to a historical cataclysm. In this way, site as structure within the image emerges as conceptual to the overall image/time, its topological structure becomes a 'state' into which the viewer is asked to re-locate.<sup>349</sup>

Like Tarkovsky, Ohanian appears interested '*in the inner, moral qualities essentially inherent in time itself*'.<sup>350</sup>

Time as material is structural, witnessed as a visual paradox within space. It resounds in the work as clearly as the soundtrack. Individual places are not merely points on a map, but are '*integrations of space and time; as spatio-temporal events*' orchestrated to happen simultaneously across seven screens, thus locating geography as time, and in this way, the work's aesthetic texture begins to be exposed.<sup>351</sup>

When Camera 2 is witnessed, it is located in a car travelling from the furthest visual point, to show the topological breadth of the valley floor whilst witnessing scenes (in passing) described in detail by

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<sup>348</sup> Tarkovsky A, (1987).

<sup>349</sup> Tarkovsky A, (1987) p57.

<sup>350</sup> Tarkovsky A, (1987) p58.

<sup>351</sup> Massey D, (2005) p130.

other lenses, directed at different geographical points in the same time frame.

Camera 6 maintains a 360° view: it is an unrelenting eye that begins with a far view of the mountains and ends on that same view. During the lens' circular journey, it views a landslide, a woman on a donkey, a motorcycle and ultimately, the cataclysmic crash, (globally) taking in the localised events of each screen. Technology becomes visible through witnessing the seven camera choreographed images, which are integrated with the landscape, and thus the process of its production is revealed.

As the frames of the screens become markers of a journey across the topology of the valley they act to stabilise image fluidity. They become places of knowledge production situated in a mountain valley. The screens situate the viewer into wilderness, at once both timeless and causal to a binary notion of situatedness and flow, internal to the very structure of the work's overall 'imageness' - the multiple images that re-make the valleys' topology in the space of the gallery.<sup>352</sup>

Through the breadth of seven screens, image movements transgress across the boundaries of each frame. This laterally positions the viewer across the gallery space as if they too are being asked to traverse the geographical valley. Because of this, the position of the viewer is reinforced as outside of the frame, and in this interval between frame and viewer the eventual control of the final image production becomes manifest.

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<sup>352</sup> Massey D, (2005) p131.

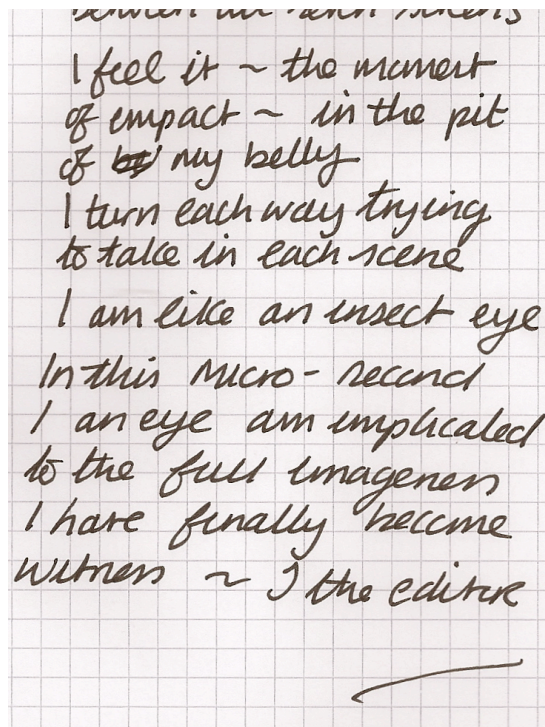


Figure 60. From notebooks Michele Whiting (2008)

Thus, the body of the viewer becomes editor of the final production: each production is unique to each and every individual viewer, each viewer receives and witnesses their own version of events sutured from the spacial narrative to which they alone are witness.<sup>353</sup>

Ohanian through developing this strategy asserts the nomad/editor (viewer) through sheer size and scale '*...an alternative form of editing occurring in space rather than time*'.<sup>354</sup>

A production strategy that the reader will note is shared with *Point of Departure* (2006) and my own *SOMII Hollow*

<sup>353</sup> Something which I also have explored in the making of my four screen work *Hollow*. See Practice Documentation. E.H.M.I, 01 *Hollow* installation in Dartmouth Avenue.

<sup>354</sup> From a pamphlet that accompanied the exhibition, South London Gallery. SLG15.p2.



## Point of Departure.

*'Of the five senses, sight dominates the way we perceive. If we hear a noise we are compelled to look for its source and only feel comfortable when we have found it.'*<sup>355</sup>

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 61. Çavuşoğlu Ergin, *Point of Departure*, Six screen installation, sound.31':36" loop, shown at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, (2006) Courtesy of The John Hansard Gallery

The six screens of *Point of Departure* are hung architecturally within the gallery space. They can be walked amongst and experienced from a myriad of positions. This composition physically constructs a unique topology of a specific landscape of security gates, defence, migration and travel.<sup>356</sup> Ergin Çavuşoğlu possesses an apparent set of artistic/topographic strategies seen in making and installing this ambitious moving image installation.<sup>357</sup>

<sup>355</sup> Feeke S, (2004). From an essay, *John Logie Baird and Stooky Bill: Ventriloquism in early television*. In an exhibition catalogue, *With Hidden Noise, Sculpture, Video and Ventriloquism*. Curated by `Stephen Feeke and Jon Wood. Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. 8<sup>th</sup> May- 8<sup>th</sup> August (2004).

<sup>356</sup> Çavuşoğlu E, (2006). p31.

<sup>357</sup> The installation comprises of thirty one minute loop, six screen projection, Shown at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, 4<sup>th</sup> May-17<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

*Point of Departure* has at the heart of its fractured multi-screen narrative, two characters: a British journalist and a Turkish academic. It tells of two contiguous journeys from two international airports, London Stanstead and Trabzon, North East Turkey. Eventually the characters' paths meet and cross over, and a further story unfolds of greater personal journeys ahead.

The camera interrogates the multiple spaces that make up the complexities of two airport departure zones: close up, above, across, impersonal and personal.

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 62. Çavuşoğlu Ergin, *Point of Departure*.  
Six screen installation, sound.31':36" loop, shown at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, (2006) Courtesy of The John Hansard Gallery.

Evoking security gateways of departure zones and, comparative with Ohanian's work, this SOMII also demands physical movement from the viewer, who is encouraged to move imaginatively through space past the rigid structures of the screens. Çavuşoğlu in an interview explains his relationship to the multi-screen:

*'...Talking about the controlled architectural environment, my awareness of the multiple screen projections, multiple screen filmmaking, its not really (a) film making, it refers to Multiplex cinemas admired by many directors, saying it is a form of chaos...*

*...In a sense my awareness of multiple screens (and) of telling parallel stories guides me to work more with the environment to try to tell the viewer how to navigate within that space...*<sup>358</sup>

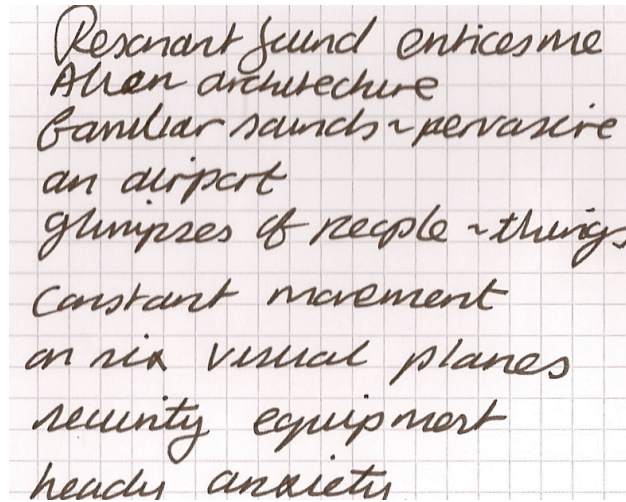


Figure 63. From Notebook. Michele Whiting (2006)

Clare Doherty draws attention to the fact that to only view this work through the conventions of Auge's notion of Non-Place would be to miss the artist's engagement with details that make up specific places in space/time.<sup>359</sup> If we restrict our reading to knowledge of it as a departure lounge, then we assume a non-relational position concerned with identity as the consummate expression of non-place.<sup>360</sup> To ignore its specific details is to skim across it, denying Çavuşoğlu's engagement with affects produced through specific site, determining the work without exploring local characteristics that identify specific environments, which bring site into the body of the already known - the shared knowledge of being.

<sup>358</sup> Baltic, Ergin Çavuşoğlu: British Art Show 6. Interview with Miles Thurlow.

<sup>359</sup> Çavuşoğlu E, (2006), p31.

<sup>360</sup> The temporary space of passage, related to travel as a human activity exist in an time/space/ego excess within Marc Auge's identification of non-place, in *Non-Places, An Introduction into the Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Motorways, rail routes, the airport, railwaystation, supermarket, hotel chain, leisure parks and retail outlets all come into view as non-places.

In one example: Çavuşoğlu, in using tomographic images of the interior of the luggage, reveals a sign imbued with tension, exacerbating anxiety within the ensemble of the work:

*'Like many important terms such as 'exile', 'diaspora', 'migration' or 'hybridity', the suitcase has become the signifier of mobility, displacement, duality and the overwrought emotional climates in which these circulate'.<sup>361</sup>*

Tomograms pass across the installation floor, as though passing by on a security conveyor belt.<sup>362</sup>

This is a particular instance where the viewer is implicated in the screening process of luggage and therefore also becomes implicated in politics of airport security. The status of the viewer/passenger changes to a position of becoming personally responsible for their security via a process of scrutiny. This engagement introduces a political context, which resonates at a sub-level throughout the work's materiality, as a consequence of experience of site. It is evocative of Jane and Louise Wilsons *Stasi City* (1997).<sup>363</sup>

Without the detail of the tomograms within the installation architecture, issues of security and political context within the work become submerged.

From the very outset, on entering the gallery space and before the moving-image installation even comes into view, the viewer comes into contact with another space. A generic space encountered prior to engaging with the installation – *an interval* - contaminated by the installation's 'acoustic-ness', external to the image but part of the spacial aspects (imageness) manipulated by an artist.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Rogoff I, (2000) p36.

<sup>362</sup> Tomograms are the x-ray images produced at the luggage scan in security check in.

<sup>363</sup> [www.archive.balticmill.com](http://www.archive.balticmill.com)

<sup>364</sup> von Drathen D, (2004)

The newly arrived viewer, in the moments before they reach the moving image destination, metaphorically crosses over into an internalised aural space, enabled through their own experience. It is tacitly understood that hearing is one of the last senses to fade as we die, equally the first to be awakened in the womb. Sound plays an intrinsic essential role in human imagination, prompting visual images that rely on personal experience, thus acoustic contamination, termed *primary sound*, is readily understood by new-viewers to signify a place-type before them.

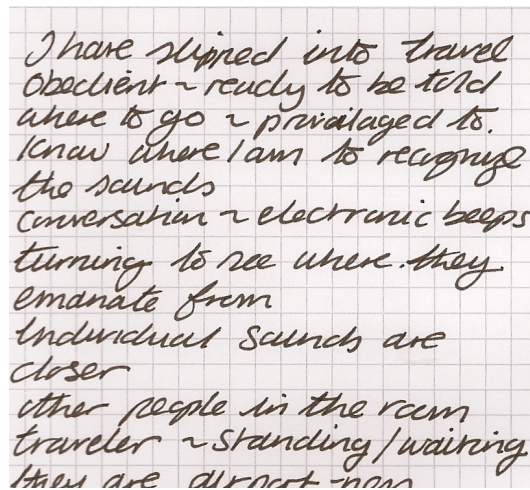
They have already begun to appropriate mental images, stemming from shared knowledge, identifying with it because of the details located in sounds that signify a type of place. It is the ambient noise of airport contaminating the space, which permits a notion of airport-ness to form inside the new viewers mind. This happens in an extremely short time frame – in fractured micro-time - before the visual and the audio becomes whole (an interval) measured only by steps and strides.

Notions of place begin to form at this very early juncture, accepting that place, in this text, is regarded as characteristic experience or symptom of the location or site of filming:

*'The work unfolds into a complex architectural structure and uses directional sound projection, which allows the viewer to navigate and observe, but also to experience the space in the form of place...'*<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Ergin Çavuşoğlu in conversation with Professor Tim Cresswell. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June. Arncliffe, Bristol. Part of *Material City* 3.2006.



I have slipped into travel  
 Obdient ~ ready to be told  
 where to go ~ privileged to.  
 I know where I am to recognize  
 the sounds  
 conversation ~ electronic beeps  
 turning to see where they  
 emanate from  
 Individual sounds are  
 closer  
 other people in the room  
 traveler ~ standing / waiting  
 they are almost none

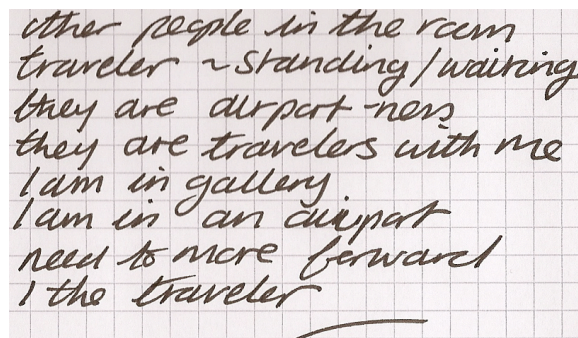
Figure 64. From notebook. Michele Whiting (2008)

On approach to the installation, viewers experience both disorientation and disengagement, through a process that has been described by T.S.Eliot as '*Auditory Imagination*.' <sup>366</sup> A number of events happen directly from auditory stimulation, (such as listening, recalling, imagining, reshaping and creating) '*Auditory imagination*' appears to dwell in a zone that could be described as internalised geography.

On entering and getting closer to the environment of the moving image, and on hearing emergent 'noise', the viewer is temporarily put into an uncomfortable space - a space where (s)he is looking for the root of the sound. Those who have entered the gallery have also entered 'airport'. It is in this unsettling event that a fragmentary introspection occurs which helps orient them through a type of familiarity, in this case, audio familiarity by associating sound with action and place. This could also be termed 'audio cognition', which subtly manifests as a space of internal negotiation, where initially, and fleetingly, they inhabit a lost dimension of experience - as described elegantly by Brian Massumi - as the relationship between

<sup>366</sup> T.S.Eliot, *The Three Voices of Poetry*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1954. Cited in the Exhibition Catalogue, *With Hidden Noise*, Sculpture, Video and Ventriloquism. Curated by Stephen Feeke and Jon Wood. Henry Moore Institute. Leeds. 8<sup>th</sup> May-8<sup>th</sup> August.2004.

sense systems, linking dimensions to each other locally, specifically, when lost or confused.<sup>367</sup>



other people in the room  
 traveler ~ standing / waiting  
 they are airport -ners  
 they are travelers with me  
 I am in gallery  
 I am in an airport  
 need to move forward  
 I the traveler

Figure 65. From notebook (2008)

Massumi's orienting abilities based on cognition, when applied here, position the viewer as becoming lost on entering the contaminated generic space before the determined space of the SOMII. Lost and without a fixed position from which to see, they root for positions through the audio signifiers at work, thus challenging the conventions of relations between representation and perception.

*'...to perceive the painful breach between the experienced and the narrated world means nothing less than the discovery of a hiatus between oneself and reality-casting doubt on reality, watching and querying one's own shadow, intimating emptiness and void'*<sup>368</sup>

The sensory organisational skills that go towards understanding perception, such as: the processes of interpreting, selecting, organising, take place at this unique moment, in conjunction with physical movement, required to simultaneously perceive and prepare to move in order to be oriented. This event is often referred to as perception through action.

<sup>367</sup> Massumi B, (2002) p182.

<sup>368</sup> von Drathen D, (2004) p83.

*'... perception is basically an implicit preparation to respond. Its function is to prepare the organism for adaptive action.'*<sup>369</sup>

There is a major difference in the process of recovery that happens in a real world situation, as compared to virtual situations. The de-situated viewer is tacitly asked not to touch the artwork, which is understood as a cultural condition of being allowed to see it. Gabriel Robles-De-La Torre in a paper, *'Haptic User Interfaces for Multimedia Systems'* states that sight cannot make up for the loss of touch: *'It results in catastrophic impairments of hand dexterity, haptic capabilities, walking, perception of limb position, and so on...'*<sup>370</sup>

New viewers, momentarily lost, orient themselves through both senses of hearing and sight, but maintain a sense of loss, imposed by not being able to touch. Because of this, the viewers/victims<sup>371</sup> are made hyperaware of the movements of their body in relation to the work itself. They are newly self-conscious and, just as travellers are aware of their bodies in the departure zone of the airport, so viewers are self-aware within this manipulated audio-pre-space.

According to geographer Yi Fu Tuan, there are two principal kinds of mythical space that persist in the world. One *'is a fuzzy area of defective knowledge surrounding the empirically known; it frames pragmatic space.'*<sup>372</sup> The other centres on a *'...conception of localised values, within which people carry on their practical activities'*. The former space can be described as a field that surrounds a pragmatic space. It may be a lesser examined space; but one that exists as an unconscious way of orienting or locating

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<sup>369</sup> Roger Sperry wrote in 1952, <http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au> retrieved 0<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

See also, [www.physhology.concordia.ca/fac/gurnsey/PSYC350/goodalemilner.pdf](http://www.physhology.concordia.ca/fac/gurnsey/PSYC350/goodalemilner.pdf) Retrieved. January 12<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>370</sup> <http://roblesdelatorre.com> Retrieved 7<sup>th</sup> October 2007. 15:29pm.

<sup>371</sup> Kabakov I, (1995)

<sup>372</sup> Tuan Yi- Fu. (1977) p86.



ourselves by using our tacit knowledge that exists in the '*broad field beyond the range of perception.*'<sup>373</sup>

Similarities can be drawn with this contaminated acoustic field, that pre-place the viewer into pre-ordered ranges of codes, and these codes construct a synthetic aural space, referring back to Tuan's fuzzy area of defective knowledge that acts as a kind of awareness forewarning them that they are arriving in a specific kind of territory. Sound is made 'visible' by triggers of memory, and this helps orient them towards the SOMII and ensuing images. By exploring audio signifiers, the work reveals a set of sound structures that speak of locational identity. Inter-relationship between primary sound, the work's architecture, and the surrounding exhibition space defies normal conventions of the installation, and was made explicit in Kabakov's 1990's treatise:<sup>374</sup>

*'The relationship between the object and the space surrounding it appears in the West in such a way that the main deciding and dominating role belongs only to the object.'*<sup>375</sup>

Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Figure 66. Çavuşoğlu Ergin. *Point of Departure* (2006)  
Courtesy of The John Hansard Gallery and Ergin Çavuşoğlu.

<sup>373</sup> Tuan Yi –Fu, (1977) pp87.

<sup>374</sup> Kabakov I, (1995) p243.

<sup>375</sup> Kabakov I, (1995) p 244.

This perhaps comes closer to Miwon Kwon's notion of addressing uneven adjacencies,<sup>376</sup> descriptive of the process by which a relationally sensitive practitioner contends with difference in space. In this context, it refers to space of many locations: the physical space created by installation, space of the contaminated field outside of the installation, and imaginary space internal to the viewer. It is for the artist to negotiate between these spaces in the process of installing:

*'...I remember that I had to negotiate the sounds coming from the two large installations in the exhibition, 'Point of Departure' and 'Adrift', due to the openness of the space. These adjustments to the sound levels often relate to the materials used in the building of the gallery space, the dimensions and so on, and so on. Sometimes the exhibition space will not allow amplification, because of reverberations, and distortions, and then I have to focus on prioritising one channel's sound over another, or high pitch over low frequency in order to communicate the work in the intended way.'*<sup>377</sup>

*'Point of Departure uses three audio channels, which relate to different aspects of the airport experience. One is about the almost repetitive ambient sound of the airport lounge, the second one is about bringing out rhythmic close up sounds such as keys thrown into trays to go in to the X-ray machine, the general café sounds, echoing announcements etc., and the third one depicts the dialogues between the characters, which are beamed within particular parts of the installation in relation to the screens...'*<sup>378</sup>

In initially dominating the exhibition space, it is primary sound, constructed from mechanisms of edited sound by Çavuşoğlu, rather than the structure of the installation or projected images, which describe a particular geopolitical site. This inhabits a pre-determined

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<sup>376</sup> Kwon M, (2004).

<sup>377</sup> From an e conversation with Ergin Çavuşoğlu (May 2008).

<sup>378</sup> From an e conversation with Ergin Çavuşoğlu (May 2008).

personal and internal space of borders and movement. It is a space that pervades and initially dominates the environment. In doing so, the sound describes space conceptually outside of the immediate visual givens of installation architecture and gallery. This particular psycho-geographic space can be seen to have an influence on the internalising systems of the human mind.

In applying Kabakov's language of describing the 'total installation', the viewer/victim of the installation evaluates auditory impressions that lead to recollections. These are introspectively consumed whilst simultaneously re-regarding the introspection of aural space. So that on approaching the installation, it is the intensity or richness rather than the levels of the sound that diverts the viewer towards engagement:

*'The work unfolds into complex architectural structure and uses directional sound projection, which allows the viewer not only to navigate and observe, but also to experience the space in the form of a place'*<sup>379</sup>

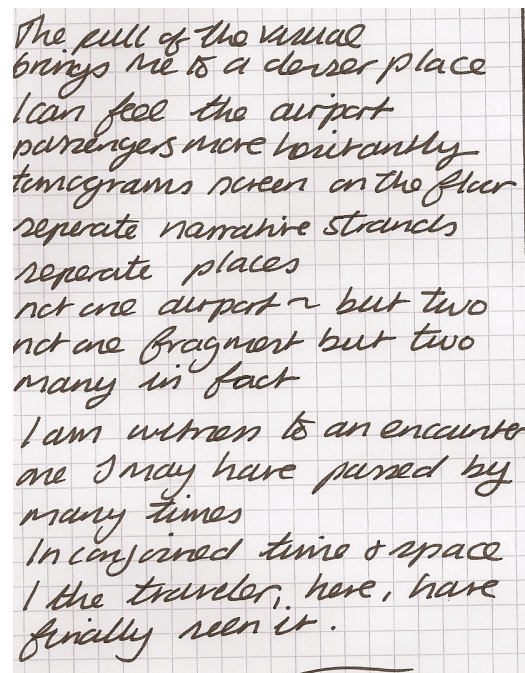
This fleeting sensation could claim to be a type of temporal cartography based on our own internalised experience, an audio-geography evoking an invisible inner sense of border, as a new awareness that a space is being created begins to grow larger and more pervasive than the seductive glow emanating from architecturally deployed multiple screens. Thus the work operates with a highly complex set of structures that remain open to questions. It has something in common with Guy Debord's concept of '*Derivé*', psycho-geographically allowing the viewer to be drawn to the visuals by the audio attractions of the terrain and its encounters, by urging them to re-listen to their own *drift* towards an encounter, sometimes

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<sup>379</sup> Ergin Çavuşoğlu in conversation with Professor Tim Cresswell. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June. Arnolfini Bristol. Part of Material City 3.

fixating on a small sound magnified, opening up a different and larger geographic reality.<sup>380</sup>

*'...In terms of differentiating the soundscapes of both airport lounges, the sound is mostly related to what happens in the image. For instance if four screens show footage from Stansted airport, in the ambient mix the sound recorded at Stansted will be the dominant one, although I have intentionally mixed the sounds from both places throughout the installation. However if I would like to direct the viewer's attention to a particular scene, which is lets say at Trabzon airport, I will amplify the sound, or the effects channel related to that screen...'*<sup>381</sup>



The pull of the visual  
brings me to a denser place  
I can feel the airport  
passengers more tangibly  
timeograms screen on the floor  
separate narrative strands  
separate places  
not one airport ~ but two  
not one fragment but two  
many in fact  
I am witness to an encounter  
one I may have passed by  
many times  
In conjoined time & space  
I the traveler, here, have  
finally seen it.

Figure 67. From notebook Michele Whiting (2008)

<sup>380</sup> As defined by Guy Debord around 1955, whereby through a process of free movement and attraction, a re-mapping of a particular space can come into view, a process used often in the works of artists who undertake specific journeys in particular.. 'Theory of Derive' *Situationist International Anthology*. 1958, cited in Claire Doherty. *Contemporary Art from Studio to Situation*, Black Dog Publishing. London 2004. p12.

<sup>381</sup> From an e conversation with Ergin Çavuşoğlu (May 2008).

As the installation comes into view, the denser the auditory environment becomes. The 'sound-scape' becomes increasingly directional and makes transparent sound mechanics by orientating the viewer in place and time.

### **Hollow (2008)**

**To follow my process, please go to Practice Documentation, East. E.H.P.D.01-11 plus photo/stills and moving image.**

In the context of discussing multiple screens and multiple spaces, my own SOMII *Hollow* (2008) can usefully serve to address ways in which sites' fluid multiple streams of information can be actively delimited, and so consumed through art practice.

This happens via two performances made in response to the site, their documentation and subsequent on-site filming. The title of the work (*Hollow*) refers as much to geographical site as it does to 'hollowness' of space experienced in installation,<sup>382</sup> it has also been described by independent viewers as a 'feeling' resonant within the installation space.<sup>383</sup>

Ergin Çavuşoğlu's *Point of Departure*, or Matt White's *This Is The Place*, may be seen as a re-invigoration or re-imagining of sites' uneven spaces. Whilst *Hollow* explores these concerns, it also contends that although the space of the site is experienced and mediated from the inside by performers, it is also fully witnessed, not as void space, but as an ideological, poetic, fluid and verb-like space

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<sup>382</sup> Prompted by Kossoff A, (2007), p 68.

<sup>383</sup> The work was installed in BSAD Project Space, Dartmouth Rd. Bath, and a workshop was held December 2008.

via production processes, and again via the viewer in the grey space of the gallery.<sup>384</sup>

Uncommon conjunctive notions of performance combined with specific geographic site inhabit this work, and are iterated in the works' internal geographic structure and broken narrative, again reflecting moving image projection's willingness to continue its dialogue with Expanded Cinema.<sup>385</sup>

*'...the decomposition of narrative films, once subversive is now (considered) normal.'*<sup>386</sup>

The moving image presents a particular rural English country cottage and its location, which serves as context for discussion on how space can be imaginatively consumed, and it's developing inter-relationship between artist, site and viewer.

Like *Point of Departure*, the work is predicated on fractured narrative, like *Seven Minutes Before*, the work is filmed simultaneously, this time across four cameras spanning geographic site and time.



Figure 68. Site view, early spring. Michele Whiting (2006)

<sup>384</sup> Multi-media artist Roni Horne articulates her own idea of landscape as 'a verb', a moving space that evolves and is alive, and the nuance of the use of the landscape as an active 'verb-like' space is relocated within Horne's work into the space of the gallery.

<sup>385</sup> Aitkin D, Daniel N, (2006).

<sup>386</sup> Burgin V, (2004) p8.

I discovered the houses on the edge of Salisbury Plain. They had been two farm workers' cottages, 'Highland Cottages', part of a busy cattle farm. The cottages were built in the early 1900's. Old maps show that the interwar years saw the army take over the site for military purposes. Historically the army has been active in the region since pre-World War I.<sup>387</sup>

They have been altered to accommodate warfare. The windows have been bricked up leaving firing squints. The roof has been replaced by corrugated iron, doors removed and the vegetation around the houses has overgrown most of the pathways.

The houses have effectively become one site. Notions of comfort and domesticity have been subverted. The topographical location has become dangerous. The site is still active, used by the British Army for tactical training exercises, as evidenced by the litter of empty shell cases found on the ground.

I revisited many times, saw seasons come and go, watched and waited from a distance to try to understand this site's contradictory and complex nature. Cutting through my reverie, as I puzzled the site's conundrum, I began to read Edward Soja's text asserting a thirdspace, an '*Aleph like*' space, where all and nothing, here and there, then and now, happen in simultaneity.<sup>388</sup>

Returning to the site, it was apparent that in order to fully experience and engage with its vast presence, to really keep open any notions of thirdspace-ness I would need to produce encounters, observing how others responded - to preserve its very openness and vitality. I invited two performance artists to encounter and respond: Laura Wilson, a London-based, Belfast-born performance artist, and Peter

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<sup>387</sup> The British Army own the cottages, and the whole area covers about seven acres and includes a field to the front of the cottages, I had to seek permission to use the site for my filming, this took about eight months to obtain, during this time I read voraciously in an attempt to understand what I was seeing.

<sup>388</sup> Soja E,W, (1996).

Assirati, a West Country-based, London-born performance artist, musician and teacher.

The houses military history suggests that it would have been used for troop practice manoeuvres at the times of 'the troubles'. Peter Assirati has strong familial history with the East End of London and 'the Blitz', and Laura has her familial history in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I was intrigued to see if the two artists' responses to the house and site would be informed by any personal, or historical perspectives. The performances would be documented and used as 'found footage', edited alongside images that focused on visual proximity within the site, which would be used to investigate it's material and imaginary facets.



Figure 69. Whiting Michele. *Hollow* (2008) 25' four screen installation Video Still.

Recognising certain key poetic notions in Borge's metaphor of The Aleph, through examining a combination of real and imagined



geographic spaces, *'the image is created through co-operation between real and unreal.'* Thus video is realised as dialectic between perception, imagination, memory and reality of the image enacted through the performance of the artists. This suggests a *'radically open perspective'* - a perspective that admits an open approach to it's making such as the use of ambient sound, natural light and a tendency towards coincidence.<sup>389</sup> In this way, dynamics within the performances would further site's spacial investigation. Claiming strength from each other, as Bachelard said would happen when two poetic images - that are realised from separate dreams - appear to gain strength from each other.<sup>390</sup>

Observing the site over time indicated that, mid spring at twilight would be the optimum time to film - a strange crepuscular space/time in-between sunset and darkness, when the failing light would illuminate the buildings sufficiently to encounter them as a domestic space. Bachelard's notion that a house constitutes a body of images emanates from this domestic scene. Twilight conditions show the houses as being unified into one house - as a notional psychological homecoming at the end of the day - an illusion of 'stability'.<sup>391</sup>



Figure 70. Pre-production notes. Michele Whiting.

<sup>389</sup> Bachelard G, (1994) p59. Also this is resonant with the Italian Neo-Realists who developed a film thematic that explored the marginalised, poor working class conditions of post-war Italy, emphasising the emotional over the abstract. Developed in the late 1940's and maturing in the early 1950's, including early works of Federico Fellini and Roberto Rossellini. See also Soja E.W.(1996) p5.

<sup>390</sup> Bachelard G, (1994) p59.

<sup>391</sup> Bachelard G, (1994) p17.

I placed four cameras across the length and breadth of the site, facing the cardinal points, North, South, East and West, within the central being of the work, crucial also to future edits which would cut across all four frames simultaneously.<sup>392</sup>

Because of the topological variations light was uneven, the distance to the house from camera points varied, the house itself was cast as central protagonist and the cameras, once in position, were locked off.<sup>393</sup> The fixed video camera is indicative of surveillance. However, the decision to film with a fixed point of view stemmed from understanding the filmmaker's dilemma of image unification. Locking off was a strategic choice towards future edits. Experience told me that four streams of images would be better assembled by laying down a few fixed markers in the heart of the process; in other words, to begin to delimit open, fluid, and unstable terrain from within, testing Trangmar's durational still to capacity. The points of focus within the frames amounted to the elevations of the house. Phenomenologically and aesthetically the frame acts as a holding device for the coming together of movement and thus time represented in space.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Conceptually central (as we have already witnessed) to works such as *This Is The Place*. Matt White. 2008.

<sup>393</sup> To lock off a camera in effect fixes the framing of the image, thus the movement happens within a fixed frame. Artist, Susan Trangmar succinctly refers to this procedure as 'a durational still' thus reflecting her photographic background.

<sup>394</sup> Kossoff A, (2007) p108.



Figure 71. Mid-edit stills showing the quadruple split screen, changes in light saturation can be clearly seen. Michele Whiting (2008)  
The closing shot of the sun setting at the end of the day reflects the hand held shots used by William Raban.

The inactive scrutinising 'eye' of the fixed point of view lens, indicates space outside of the frame, that the performers activate as they cross its threshold moments before they enter into another frame. The site continues to be mapped across the spacial divide as well as within the single image by the bodies inscribing it.<sup>395</sup>

As the light failed, the cameras were switched off.

The performers, through their performance, became site. I therefore treated their work throughout the editing process as inherent to site - as found footage - not as documentation of performance or narrative 'thread'. Editing simultaneously across image frames became a series of rhythmic decisions, based on other factors: sound, light, image, forms and so on. Gathering its own principals and logic as the work evolved.

Video's materiality provides an opportunity for reflexivity, defined by an ability to stretch, compress, and reverse image fields;<sup>396</sup> processes that Yvonne Spielmann notes are akin to language,

<sup>395</sup> In reference to the single image, this technique was poetically pursued by experimental film maker, Margaret Tait in her 1952 film, *Portrait of Ga.* 4.30 mins, colour.

<sup>396</sup> Spielmann Y, (2008). *Video. The Reflexive Medium*. Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England. MIT Press, p191.

literature and poetry. Video's pliability and complexity thus produce a language characterised by its formal property, its infinite variations define its very nature, producing reflexive actions (by the artist) that mediate the works composure.<sup>397</sup>

The filming continued past the performance day, concentrating on the overlooked and unaccounted for: the debris of the site. Later, I returned to film the maize high in the (front) field, using the camera as an extension of my body, brushing through, feeling the sinewy rough quality of plants against the camera. Thereby instating myself through the introduction of hand-held camera movement, as a modest subtext within the moving image.

Back in the edit suite, overlaying images, a relationship was set up between the far space of the house/site and the proximate space of the maize. Placing them in different relations to each other new space was drawn. Across the four frames, images retreat and venture forth whilst the journey through the maize continues. It is here that video's syntactical principals can be "witnessed" as sequential overlaying of one set of sign systems over another, image and audio merged together to originate divergent internal rhythms.

Within *Hollow* images are never allowed to settle. The composition of the four moving elements within the grid of a single screen<sup>398</sup> allows a sense of re-inscribing of original paths of site. Its complex variations become metaphorical for this historical domestic site, thus the work's rhythm is transparent, emphasising repetition and doubling which explores mapping of site, re-instating and re-affirming the pathways of place.

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<sup>397</sup> Spielmann Y, (2008) *Video. The Reflexive Medium*. Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England. MIT Press. p191.

<sup>398</sup> Editing picture in picture was the only way I could gauge a measure of what was happening across all four screens simultaneously.



Figure 72. *Hollow* in studio on 28<sup>th</sup> November (2008) Bath School of Art and Design. Dartmouth Avenue, Bath.

It is apparent that geographic in the context of this SOMII describes structures inherent within site and moving image: the regional, the personal, the emotive and the imaginative, ascribing phenomenological experience - Merleau-Ponty's '*lived experience*', to the site's production and its installation.<sup>399</sup> This landscape has been re-drawn. Its global predicament has been recognised issuing from the lure of the local.<sup>400</sup>

The installation plays with orienting the viewer - in a similar way to *Point of Departure* - who are metaphorically outside the house, site and its relations. By their bodies, other space is reinvigorated, they must edit through space, time and image. In this way the viewer to the installed work must move around the exploded elevations of the site in order to understand the keystones to this spacial ensemble. Thus delimitation is witnessed and felt.

Through each viewer's shifting gaze, transitional states are negotiated and their own internal geographic interpretation - their own internal logic to the moving images is encountered, through the

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<sup>399</sup> Merleau - Ponty M, (2004)  
<sup>400</sup> Lippard L, R, (1997) p 37.

action of their bodily edit- into which they must enter in order to *view* the work.

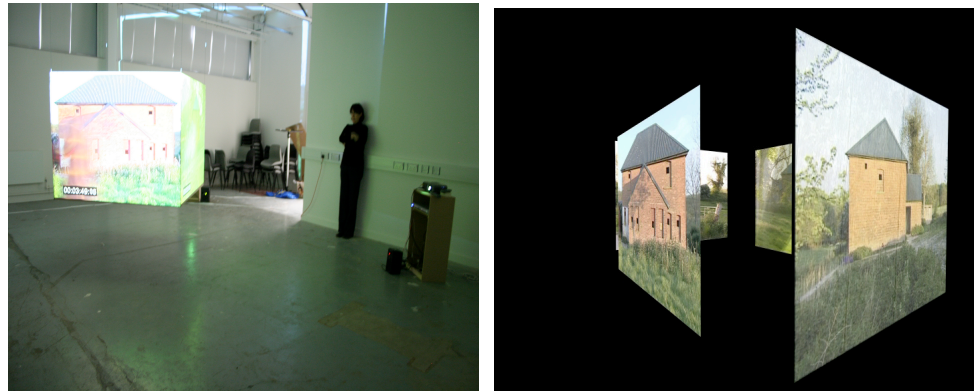


Figure 73. Images from studio notes, during the making of *Hollow*, indicating scale and space within the architecture. Michele Whiting (2008)

This takes place outside of the image: subjective, incomplete and chaotic, a performance-like outside skin stretched around the work.

The iridescent cube of the moving image installation hovers in the dark mid-space of the studio. It holds space and time, contains but cannot limit. It shifts, mutates and changes for each and every viewer, in each and every new space where it is shown, but it also remains the same. *Hollow* argues for space that, although highly complex and fluid, is recognised as imaginative performative space, where openness is considered a virtue with its own inherent, alternative, shifting parameters.

## Conclusion.

Melik Ohanian's *Seven Minutes Before*, Ergin Çavuşoğlu's *Point of Departure* and *Hollow* claim history in cinematic images through multi-systems<sup>401</sup> of framing, language, and narrative, (albeit

<sup>401</sup> Leighton T, (2008) p299

fractured). However, they move determinedly beyond cinema<sup>402</sup> through technically resolved architectural installation structures, observed even from within the films' constructions. This aspect is common to these works and a strategy used by many contemporary artists today in other contexts. What is different however is that they investigate specific site through a pre-determined use of multi-screen moving images, engaging with paradoxical space/time resonant within the original site and inherent within its production process. They also emerge as having a certain poetics within both audio and imagery.

*'If art can be said to advance... the gallery having become a far more receptive theatre for the unconventional than the viewpoint-dependent apparatus of traditional film-going...'*<sup>403</sup>

In making and viewing the moving image installations discussed in this chapter, I have rigorously explored the act of seeing beyond normal optical perception, overstepping (in a similar vein to Panofsky) the limits of formal perception to enter a nexus of meaning. In so doing, I am keenly aware that the works touch on materiality, asserting size, number and scale, which when coupled with site being determined as central to the concept of the work, may be described as a leitmotif,<sup>404</sup> certainly a mutual concern leading again to thinking of these works as interconnected (particularly with the works in chapter four) as part of a larger sub-category.

In common, these multi-screen SOMI all excite movement from the viewer, who must move through them to gain more than the partial view, in common with experiencing works like *Esc, If I had You*, and even Landy's *Semi Detached* in Chapter three. Each step that is

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<sup>402</sup> Cinema's traditional single screen perspective is referred to here, even though the quadrants of Mike Figgis's *Time Code*, (2000) amongst other split screen films are taken into account.

<sup>403</sup> Leighton T. (2008) p301.

<sup>404</sup> Inspired by von Drathen D, (2004).

taken re-frames the work. This movement becomes an element of the work in its own right and unites these works into a shared presentational form. It is *a movement of editing* negotiated by the viewer, prompted by the artist, and encouraged by their mutual negotiations with sound. Thus sound is asserted in this installation type, as we have seen in *Points of Departure* and also as can be experienced in *Hollow* (2008) and *If I had You* (chapter three).

In creating a multi-plane experience, artists have created familiar *totemic experiences*,<sup>405</sup> (akin to the works in chapter three). In these almost-familiar situations, the viewer encounters a duality of emotional states akin to a see saw that balances between: peace and cataclysm, nature and construction (Ohanian), safety and danger (*Hollow*) and between the expected and the unexpected (Çavuşoğlu). In these circumstances, experience locates the viewer as discussed in chapter four, but here, in negotiating the sheer size of the physical space, one experience overlays another. Signs merge into signs and instead of negating one another (as may be expected) they exacerbate one another to a point of sensation.

Paradoxically, only by wandering through the works am I forced back to re-look, only by relinquishing aesthetic norms and instead embracing them for the evocative matter that they are, can I move forward. In this way, through each shifting gaze, transitional states are negotiated, and thus their own internal geographic interpretation - their own internal logic to the moving image - is encountered and felt in the action/event of the viewers' bodily edit.

In some sense this evokes a similar response to works in the last chapter, in that the meaning of the work is accessed through purpose and the geography intrinsic to the work is experienced uniquely. Thus the power of the installations, their intrinsic value, resonates in mid space between them and us, between here and there. It is in this in-between or elsewhere space that the sense of the work is

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<sup>405</sup> von Drathen D. (2004) p 89.



comprehended: the gates of *Point of Departure*, the geographic stretch of the seven screens of *Seven Minutes Before*, and the four corners of *Hollow*. And it is precisely here that we begin to know the work, to feel its geographic landscape.

## Thesis Conclusion

The principal aim of this research was to investigate space, site and place through moving image installation art practice. In so doing, I began to recognise a group of works that can be identified as site oriented. Such site oriented moving image installations, or SOMII as I have called them, have the primary experience of site at their collective conceptual core. And it is the word 'experience' having a common root with exper-iment, exper-t and peri-lous<sup>406</sup> which evokes and encompasses the level of engagement that the artists in this study achieve, in order to bring the works to completion. Naming them SOMII in this abbreviated fashion also serves to highlight the gaps, pauses and intermissions that have been noted as intrinsic, shared characteristics across the works.

As my research developed, my awareness of SOMII as a collective presence began to be felt through both my primary encounters with them, and through articulating concerns around them to the wider world, and thus a secondary question emerged as to whether SOMII can be usefully designated as a sub category.

I set out to pursue the overall research by recognising the demands of truly integrated practice and theory, which I have witnessed at every conceivable level from production through to installation processes. Thus, in constructing, articulating and understanding SOMII from an artist's point of view, as well as through dialogue with other artists and gallerists, and aided by my expressed theoretical position as 'modest witness', I have apprehended an exciting, and developing research field by virtue of my engagement with it. During this time, I have contributed to a number of conferences, published research papers and shown my own SOMII in the UK and overseas. Thus, I have been able to develop a burgeoning epistemology of

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<sup>406</sup> Tuan Yi-Fu, (1977)

practice, with the expectation that this thesis will serve as a resource for other artists whose interests lead them here.

Despite, and because of the many investigations and experiences that I have undergone as a researcher, the question as to whether SOMII may be called a sub category in their own right still remains a difficult one to answer. There are countless specific sites that 'belong' to countless artists, stretching from the birth of moving image into the unimaginable future. Like space, place and site from and through which SOMII are conceived, produced and shown, they remain difficult to locate, capricious even. However, it is conceivable that these certain kinds of work (albeit mere parts of the artist's overall output) when considered together through comparative analysis begin to resonate as a particular type of, or approach to moving image.

Common to all the works in this selected study, such approaches have space, place and site located, felt and perceived as subject, integral as much to the concept of these works as to the installed SOMII. Thus, they show themselves as largely determined by the geography of the original site. They are *of* site, and their geographies are often expressed in the method of installation, as seen historically in William Raban's breadth of the *Thames Barrier*. They provoke a sense of geography felt within (single) and without their (multiple) image planes, as in Tait's *Portrait of Ga*, and my own four-screen installation *Hollow*. The spaces apprehended are commonly unrepresentative of geography's actuality. Instead they are suggestive through dislocation of space, place and site, particularly apparent in *This is the Place* by Matt White and my own work *Coast, six short minutes*. These characteristics are vital to the installations in this thesis.

Site can be seen as literal in situ. In this way the works' formal outcomes are determined by physical place, reflecting a perception

of site's internal spaces as unique, seen historically and conceptually in Warhol's single screen durational film *Empire*, and even more apparent in Çavuşoğlu's *Point of Departure*, which because of its orientation towards the original locational sites of the two airports, also clearly indicates that notions of space, place and site are consciously apparent and indeed manipulated throughout the differing stages of production and installation - particularly visible both in the gateway-like architecture and sound-scape.<sup>407</sup>

Paradoxically sites are also imaginative, demonstrated through experiencing Darren Almond's multiple moving image planes, which although located in specific space and time, allude to other times and spaces in the place of their installation, in this way the viewer (re) experiences place through imagined space. This approach also shares ground with my own SOMII *Percipere*, which is located between literal and imaginative space. Place as collective cultural memory is uncovered in relation to Willie Doherty's *Ghost Story*, whilst sacred space is evoked in Ori Gersht's *The Forest*.

I have emphasised camera techniques in both works in relation to the camera's interrogation of specific site, in particular choreographed durational movements of the lens' which are used to provoke imaginal space within the moving image construct. With its fugue-like collaged images, my work explores similar strategies again in *Coast, six short minutes*, emerging in relation to history and memory as a symptom of site, and adopted as processural strategy, located within SOMII's rich gestalt - as their indivisible and indissoluble whole.<sup>408</sup>

It is clear from my position as a lens-based artist, that SOMIIs' continuing presence within contemporary art practice issues from, or continues dialogue with experimental filmmakers and Expanded

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<sup>407</sup> See also, *This is the Place* (chapter four)

<sup>408</sup> Morris Robert (1966).

Cinema. This is indicated through witnessing how contemporary SOMIIs represent particular ways of thinking and making. Stretching across both time and borders, they become more visible within this selective text. Today they inhabit their own zone of art practice. This is not a reductive statement but a positivist reflection, in that the extension of interest shown on the part of artists in specific sites and moving image means that today's SOMII artists are independent thinkers, seeking their own answers to sites' specificities. They are collectively considered site-absorbed, participating in the 'real' space of place and site.<sup>409</sup> This is a unanimous gesture apprehended across the artists both interviewed and studied for this thesis.

Indication is also given that in dealing with the vagaries of outside space, artists have continued to share strategies of production whilst grasping with profound changes in technology. Why this may be the case lies in the conflation of experience, technological apparatus, and the sheer human endeavor through which they iterate the multiple layers and multiple meanings of space, place and site, and it is towards these thoughts that my future research will turn.

The artists in this thesis all move knowingly and lightly between technological apparatus, image construction and site-information,<sup>410</sup> throughout which the viewer's experience is always considered. Instead of being-in, they (the viewers) sense becoming-as in their sense of self. In this way they are full of the fractured mental imagery that fills their optical senses, and the sounds that fill their auditory senses. Such affects were experienced through the production and installation process of my own SOMII *Coast, six short minutes*, which investigates the intense experience of being in a historical site.

This leads me to Doherty's road or Landy's interior of a 'semi', which although on initial viewing one may be considered very different to the other, both works share an intensity of focus on place, (also

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<sup>409</sup> Doherty, C. 2009. P51

<sup>410</sup> issuing from Smithson's early influence seen in Chapter 2

evident in *Percipere*) – a concentration induced through technical tactics of speed and duration. This powerful proximate image space, shared across many of the works represents another pull towards a collective-thinking of works as site oriented and therefore as a potential sub-category.

Space, site and place, in the context of this investigation, are ultimately experienced and understood as a fluid nexus of things to be explored and manipulated by the artists, never more apparent than in the multiple and split images that eventually occupy space as image planes. For example: Darran Almond's *If I Had You* and Michael Landy's *Semi Detached*. These images are condensed (which again refers back to proximate image space) through reducing available visual information into carefully framed signifiers, alluding to mundane-ness in combination with something beyond the apparent, thus indicating an intimate understanding of locale used materially within the images production, and seen historically in: Jane and Louise Wilson's *Stasi City* and Margaret Tait's single screen *Portrait of Ga* and in contemporary terms, in the close proximity shots of ephemera, from the site in my own work *Hollow*. This is suggestive of overlaps, shared strategies and concerns for overcoming multi-layered complexities of space, place and site through which they (the artists) must progress in the making of SOMII works. This can be seen as another indication that SOMII may be considered as a sub category of moving image art practice.

The SOMII viewer is often required to reposition themselves outside of the image boundary (as in Gunning's *Esc*), and is also often engaged in a bodily edit of the work, particularly apparent in: White's *This is the Place*, Almond's *If I Had You*, Çavuşoğlu's *Point of Departure* and Ohanian's *Seven Minutes Before*. By their participation the viewer completes the work, and each completion is unique to each viewer. The plane of existence only exists for the moment that it is experienced, and is refreshed at each and every

viewing - as I have interrogated within the installation process of *Hollow*. The viewer enters this event/interval in order to view the work. The final edit that takes place is independent of the given image, autonomous, subjective, incomplete and chaotic to some extent, which is perhaps the point of this type of work after all.

SOMIIs character is best described as forward movement across time, measured by gaps, intervals, intermissions and attempts to grasp transitions from local into global, through conceptual and technological processes that spring from re-thinking place, space and site in relation to the specifics of the artists' habitation. This forward momentum consists of mini revolutions, found in the juxtaposition of bird song combined with images of Tait's mother, influenced by the Italian Neo-Realists, or the technological doubling of Andy Warhol's portrait of Edie Sedgwick. Moving nearer in time, *Stasi City's* 'compression' experienced through scale in the space of the installation, and Ohanian's extreme filming techniques are both small revolutions that phenomenologically effect other pre-occupations in practice such as: editing, image, and sound values.

Ultimately depiction is surpassed across all of the works, and because of this the space outside of the image - described in this text in varying guises from synthetic to other - begins to be felt as sentient place. This occurs because, through making the works, the formal outcomes are guided by the artist's vector of site, through which s(he) contingently connects the viewer to its specificities, and which is linked back to the artist in a phenomenological and reciprocal space of exchange. Re-affirming von Drathen's remark that they (the artists) '*make us become them, they draw us into the compound*' which seems particularly appropriate to today's SOMII artist. Thus, space is experienced in this thesis as the event of the work, existing as experience in time, as interval, to be consumed by the body of the viewer. This is considered post-immersive, as an other type of space, the 'elsewhere' of this thesis title. Thus, these

ideological spaces are common across works that I have both encountered and created. They register beyond image depiction as other spaces of enquiry; their presence felt as external to the image frame and the technology that delivers it, as in Gersht's forest, or Doherty's country lane. In this way, strategies emerge via an understanding of local as nexus through which the artist produces affects. Its revelation in these chapters comes closer in understanding to a plane of existence wherein sense and feeling (affect and percept) become not just palpable but in existence strategically calibrated, to be engaged with as material by the knowing artist.<sup>411</sup>

Across the works in this thesis, experience in/of the site acts as momentum to the work, and is eventually felt in the body of the viewer emanating from the spatial structure of the image and the installation. It is through this that the notion of universal space is apprehended across the collective works, and that this space is unique to each SOMII experienced.

Locational /Specific site → Artist → Structural Space → Universal space →

### **SOMII**

Universal space is also felt through apprehending notions of the local, thus reflecting global sensibilities through the viewer's very familiarity. To a large degree this may be through shared cultural knowledge such as familial relationships (Landy) or history (Gerscht) effectively re-locating the viewer as internalised subject within the installation space, thus relationally altering spaces' function. This was experienced as the feeling of the dance floor in Landy's *If I had you*, or as the sensing of politics through duration in Warhol's *Empire*, and through the sense of compression (in Jane and Louise

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<sup>411</sup> The Artes Mundi prize brings together outstanding artists from around the world who stimulate thinking about the human condition and humanity, thus re-affirming this position. The prize is now in its fourth year and is the U.K.'s biggest arts prize, [www.artesmundi.org](http://www.artesmundi.org)



Wilson's *Stasi City*), and this feeling or sensing is pertinent across all SOMII art practice. It has become clear that every work experienced throughout this thesis exudes something less tangible - amorphous even - something felt outside of the image and formed through shared strategies and tactics - either by internal edits to the moving image as in Trangmar's *A Play in Time*, and in my SOMII *Percipere*, or by the placement of image planes/screens at installation in White's *This is The Place* and (historically) in Raban's *Thames Barrier*.

Through investigating SOMII's spacial strategies through practice, I have become acutely aware of another type of collective spacial exchange that might form the basis for further work in this research field,<sup>412</sup> namely moving image that uses performance to explore/expose site and its geographic interior spaces - historically seen in works by Richard Long: '*Walking a straight 10mile line forward and back shooting every half mile*', (Dartmoor 1969), and more contemporary works by Francis Alys: *When Faith Moves Mountains* (Making of) 2002-2004, and Maria Therez Alves: *The Sun* 2006.

I look forward to re-witnessing these works (and others yet to be identified) alongside the contrasting topologies and activities held within their frames. This is also a position that I have tentatively explored throughout the performances in *Hollow*, and is an area for further investigation within my art practice. The main reason for their exclusion here was the de-emphasis on installation that would have occurred within this thesis (SOMI as opposed to SOMII).

Finding commonalities in the strategies of production that we (artists) have shared, has provided me with an opportunity to optimistically recognise where there is potential for further SOMII works in the future. Examining other artists' work of alongside theoretical texts

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<sup>412</sup> This manifested during the making of *Hollow* (2008). This work will be shown as part of Psi Toronto in June, which acknowledges the works status as site performance used as found material.

has ultimately led to an even more rigorous examination of my own practice. Facing up to its inherent problems has in turn renewed with vigor, my questioning of other artists' SOMII. Problems arose during my interrogation of space, site and place (a parallel process involving the making and showing of work alongside investigating the works of others) - problems of distinguishing the influence of one from another; the inevitable overlaps inherent in the arduous process of defining this research field. Yet these are the same overlaps that serve to re-affirm SOMII's existence as a body of work that insistently utters experience of specific site.

Witnessing the works in this thesis through primary experience, and considering them alongside each other has shown innate commonalities through the shared approaches made to space, site and place, that in themselves indicate fusion points. The conceptual parameters of SOMII however, must also remain malleable and, to an extent fluid - thus reflecting the making of SOMII, which is complex, multilayered and multi formed from many spaces, times, sites and places. It is in this paradoxical space of both fusion and slippage that SOMII are revealed as a sub-category, drawing the works into a living, breathing compound which may be considered of great use to the interested artist, and through which my own practice can now claim its context.

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## Glossary of Terms

### Site

My decision to use the term 'site' positions this research away from any complex, historicised notions of **landscape** per se, and is intended as a clear move to reflect the many ideas that site-oriented contemporary artists are currently dealing with. In recent years - in what continues to feel like a site interested climate - there has been a mass of research investigating various notions of site, declaring artists who once claimed to be site specific, site determined, site interested in some way shape or form, to have progressed through engagement with other disciplines and factors to have become, site oriented or site responsive.<sup>413</sup>

Interest in site oriented work is supported by concurrent emergence of theorisation of place and it's engagement, enacted through financially supported residencies, through commissioning agencies funding specific projects,<sup>414</sup> and of course many biennales,<sup>415</sup> which can often show a complex and comprehensive range of creative strategies.

This does not suppose that in moving away from landscapes historicised centre that it is ignored, on the contrary, it is clear in all the work under the research spotlight, that 'landscape' appears to be treated as part of the installations construction, though not necessarily the motivating force behind it.

In this text to use the tightly packed phrase '**specific site**' in conjunction with 'moving image installation' acknowledges that the moving image has at its conceptual centre specific location. It also acknowledges that the

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<sup>413</sup> particularly in the cases of Miwon Kwon's critical history of complex politics and notions around site specific art since the 1960's, and also with equal emphasis on the Situations Research conducted by Clare Doherty which is a strong research resource interrogating strategies of site acknowledging and re-inforcing time and again through various articles, talks, lectures, websites and so on the multi-headed hydra that the contemporary artist concerned with site wrestles with.

<sup>414</sup> Funding bodies that support regional, site interested works include Locus+, Artangel, The Henry Morre Foundation, Arts Council England, Foundation for Sports and the Arts, and the International Centre for Fine Art Research, amongst others.

<sup>415</sup> The problematics of which have been eloquently described in an article by Claire Doherty, "*Location, Location*", "*The Biennale and the City*" Art Monthly (November 2004).

reading of the moving image is 'geographically marked',<sup>416</sup> and by this I mean that, the moving image work made in this research project -as well as the analysis of the moving image work in the following chapters - has been inspired by geographers and cultural theorists.<sup>417</sup>

The phrase acknowledges that the focus of the subject is situated in a location with signs that collectively lead to a reading of place. **Place** can be mythical, imagined and implicated, thus not considered as a closed container of 'things' (de Certeau). Accordingly sites in this context are fluid conduits through which perceptual information flows through, meaning that site can be engaged with by the artist on many levels and should be understood in terms of image, event, object and topology.

In this way, **local** can be considered a *symptom* of place, and place understood as a *symptom* of globalisation<sup>418</sup> thus *place* can be considered internal to sites shifting presence.

**Space** encompasses and exists through all of these notions, and thus it appears unbounded, fluid, slippery even.

### Space

Within the text I have sometimes referred to "space" in an attempt to ontologically over-arch conceptual site, aiming to describe a larger more fulsome picture, always understanding sites unstable characteristics. Some times this has come about through praxis, which in itself has determined an expression of something beyond, something that could be thought of as possibly more arrogant than site. Space in this evocation may not wholly be the space of the installation, but space physical, space conceptual and space emotional, thus "space" is seen arising out of the condition of site as subject.

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<sup>416</sup> Rogoff I, (2000) p. 144.

<sup>417</sup> such as Irit Rogoff (2000) and Doreen Massey (2005), texts from Yi Fu Tuan (1977) and Edward Soja (1989) have also given me inspiration.

<sup>418</sup> Massey D, (2005) See Chapter 1.

## Imageness

The word imageness occurs from time to time throughout the text. I use it to describe space outside of the image, aiming to conjure up the notion of image's ability to remain pervasive. I also use the term imageness in describing the space between multiple image planes, where the after-effects of the image conceptually collide in mid-space. The term imageness in this way makes up for a shortfall in language that bridges the divide between image, space and viewer. (which is the main reason why it remains fairly un-satisfactory.)

The term **Imaging** is also used (sparsely), to express the action of the immediate image, to hint at an image's performative nature. It can also describe, in terms of praxis the making of image.

## Installation

The very idea of installation is a pre-determined decision making process on *how* a moving image can be seen, what effect *the way it is seen* will have on the spectator and what challenges it might present to the reading of the work.

The complex term of *Installation* shall, in this context, therefore be read as an activity/event that, in situating the projected moving image work, both physically and conceptually, the viewer is activated by it, *in contrast to* (moving image) *art that simply requires optical contemplation*<sup>419</sup>.

Ilya Kabakov in his text on installation *On Total Installation*, positions the viewer as implicit within the work, he describes him/her as both Viewer/victim and actor. '*...the whole installation is oriented only towards his perception, and at any point in the installation, any of its structures is oriented only towards the impression it should make on the viewer, only his reaction is anticipated.*'<sup>420</sup> Claire Bishop<sup>421</sup> also cites Kabakov in her appraisal of *Installation* as a term, re-affirming its clarity for readily identifying the work in this context.

The phrase **Moving Image Projection** in this text can be supplanted by or exchanged with, the term installation. Projections ontology describes throwing forwards, and extension, it implies, transference, and time/space

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<sup>419</sup> From the introduction to: Bishop C, (2005)

<sup>420</sup> Kabakov I (1995). p275.

<sup>421</sup> Bishop C, (2005)

relations.<sup>422</sup> In this way, the light of the projection, describes the interior architectural space within the whole installation, '*...it allows us to plot, from a fixed point, any number of regulated correspondences between... a two dimensional picture plane and three dimensional space.*'<sup>423</sup> Thus the image, space and time are conjoined through the technology of projection. Projected images now<sup>424</sup> bring us space/time beyond conventionalized cinematic forms: projectors and their admission into the practicalities of all our lives have encouraged new configurations within the architecture of the gallery. Ontologically in this text 'projection' has been consumed whole into the term installation, mostly because of the unwieldy nature of constantly referring to projection-installation, but also to reflect it's more recent nature, as a digital technology used to *throw forward* the moving image into architectural space. Maintaining the term installation also preserves an idea of the activity of setting up technological apparatus, it has its ontological roots in electric power, and (akin to sites contemporary notion of fluidity) is invested with verb like tendencies.

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<sup>422</sup> Leighton T, (2008) p.371

<sup>423</sup> Leighton T. (2008) p.372

<sup>424</sup> There was a tendency in the 1990's for video projections to engage with cinema's materiality, seated audiences, the darkened room; however in recent years a leaning towards experimental film and early video has returned, seeking ways to re-distribute images in the architectural space of a gallery. (Tina Keane Le Jardin for example.)