idea journal

co-constructing body-environments

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the journal of IDEA: the interior design + interior architecture educators' association

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1. Objects

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(b) being an authority on, and advocate for, interior design/interior architecture/spatial design education and research.

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(b) to support the rich diversity of individual programs within the higher education sector;

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online publication editor

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IDEA Interior Design/
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correspondence

Correspondence regarding this publication should be addressed to:

Dr Lynn Churchill
c/o *idea journal*
Interior Architecture
Curtin University
GPO Box U1987
Perth 6845
Western Australia

l.churchill@curtin.edu.au

co-constructing body-environments: provocation

Presenters at *Body of Knowledge: Art and Embodied Cognition Conference* (*BoK2019* hosted by Deakin University, Melbourne, June 2019) are invited to submit contributions to a special issue of idea journal "Co-Constructing Body-Environments" to be published in December 2020. The aim of the special issue is to extend the current discussions of art as a process of social cognition and to address the gap between descriptions of embodied cognition and the co-construction of lived experience.

We ask for papers, developed from the presentations delivered at the conference, that focus on interdisciplinary connections and on findings arising from intersections across research practices that involve art and theories of cognition. In particular, papers should emphasize how spatial art and design research approaches have enabled the articulation of a complex understanding of environments, spaces and experiences. This could involve the spatial distribution of cultural, organisational and conceptual structures and relationships, as well as the surrounding design features.

Contributions may address the questions raised at the conference and explore:

+ How do art and spatial practices increase the potential for knowledge transfer and celebrate diverse forms of embodied expertise?
+ How the examination of cultures of practice, Indigenous knowledges and cultural practices offer perspectives on inclusion, diversity, neurodiversity, disability and social justice issues?
+ How the art and spatial practices may contribute to research perspectives from contemporary cognitive neuroscience and the philosophy of mind?
+ The dynamic between an organism and its surroundings for example: How does art and design shift the way knowledge and thinking processes are acquired, extended and distributed?
+ How art and design practices demonstrate the ways different forms of acquiring and producing knowledge intersect?

These and other initial provocations for the conference can be found on the conference web-site: https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/bok2019/cfp/.

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in this issue

introduction: unknowingly, a threshold-crossing movement

Julieanna Preston
Executive Editor
idea journal

It is in this special issue that the editorial board holds true to our promise to expand the horizons and readership of *idea journal* while reaching out to associated and adjacent art, design and performance practices and drawing connections to seemingly distant disciplines. The articles in this issue have provenance in a 2019 conference event, Bodies of Knowledge (BOK), which was guided by a similar interdisciplinary ethos. With an emphasis on cultures of practice and communities of practitioners that offer perspectives on inclusion, diversity/neurodiversity and disability, this conference, and this subsequent journal issue, aim to increase knowledge transfer between diverse forms of embodied expertise, in particular, between neuroscience and enactive theories of cognition.

This brief description suggests that there are shared issues, subjects and activities that have the potential of generating new understanding in cross-, inter- and trans-disciplinary affiliations and collaborations. My experience in these modes of inquiry points to the importance of identifying what is shared and what is not amongst vocabulary, concepts, pedagogies and methods. Holding these confluences and diverges without resorting to strict definition, competition or judgement of right and wrong often affords greater understanding and empathy amongst individuals to shape a collective that is diverse in its outlooks, and hopefully, curious as to what it generates together because of that diversity.

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The breadth of the knowledge bases represented within this issue necessitated that the peer reviewer list expanded once again like the previous issue. It was in the process of identifying reviewers with appropriate expertise that the various synapses between scholarly and artistic practices became evident. It is these synapses that shape sturdy bridges between the journal's existing readership, which is predominantly academics and students in interior design, interior architecture, spatial design and architecture, and the wide range of independent scholars and practitioners, academics, and students attracted to BOK's thematic call for papers, performative lectures and exhibitions. At the risk of being reductive to the complexity and nuances in the research to follow, I suggest that the following terms and concerns are central to this issue, aptly inferred by its title, 'Co-Constructing Body-Environments': spatiality; subjectivity; phenomenology; processual and procedural practice; artistic research; critical reflection; body: experience. All of these are frequent to research and practice specific to interiors. In this issue, however, we find how these terms and concerns are situated and employed in other fields, in other ways and for other purposes.

This is healthy exercise. To stretch one's reach, literally and metaphorically is to travel the distance between the me and the you, to be willingly open to what might eventuate. Imagine shaking the hand of a stranger—a somatic experience known to register peaceful intent, respect, courage, warmth, pressure, humour, nervous energy, and so much more. This threshold-crossing movement is embodied and spatial; it draws on a multitude of small yet complex communication sparks well before verbal impulses ensue. This significant bodily gesture sets the tone for what might or could happen. Based on my understanding of the research presented in 'Co-Constructing Body-Environments,' I propose that this is a procedure in the Gins and Arakawa sense that integrates theory and practice as a hypothesis for 'questioning all possible ways to observe the body-environment in order to transform it.'[01] I call this as *unknowingly*—a process that takes the risk of not knowing, not being able to predict or predetermine, something akin to the spectrum of 'throwing caution to the wind' and 'sailing close to

the wind'. My use of the word 'unknowingly' embraces intuition where direct access to unconscious knowledge and pattern-recognition, unconscious cognition, inner sensing and insight have the ability to understand something without any need for conscious reasoning. Instinct. The word *unknowingly* also affords me to invoke the 'unknowing' element of this interaction—to not know, to not be aware of, to not have all the information (as if that was possible)— an acknowledgement of human humility. I borrow and adapt this facet of unknowingly from twentieth-century British writer Alan Watts:

> This I don't know, is the same thing as, I love. I let go. I don't try to force or control. It's the same thing as humility. If you think that you understand Brahman, you do not understand. And you have yet to be instructed further. If you know that you do not understand, then you truly understand.[02]

Unknowingly also allows me to reference 'un' as a tactic of learning that suspends the engrained additive model of learning. Though I could refer to many other scholarly sources to fuel this concept, here I am indebted to Canadian author Scott H. Young's pithy advice on how to un-learn:

> This is the view that what we think we know about the world is a veneer of sense-making atop a much deeper strangeness. The things we think we know, we often don't. The ideas, philosophies and truths that guide our lives may be convenient approximations, but often the more accurate picture is a lot stranger and more interesting.[03]

In his encouragement to unlearn—dive into strangeness, sacrifice certainty, boldly expose oneself to randomness, mental discomfort, instability, to radically rethink that place/ your place/ our place, suspend aversions to mystery—Young's examples from science remind us that:

Subatomic particles aren't billiard balls, but strange, complex-valued wavefunctions. Bodies aren't vital fluids and animating impulses, but trillions of cells, each more complex than any machine humans have invented. Minds aren't unified loci of consciousness, but the process of countless synapses firing in incredible patterns.[04]

Figure 01:
Meeting the horizon; A still image from Shore Variations, a 2018 film by Claudia Kappenberg that reimagines *Waning*, a 2016 live art performance by Julieanna Preston. https://vimeo.com/user11308386.

In like manner to the *BOK2019* conference which was staged as a temporally infused knowledge-transfer event across several days, venues, geographies and disciplines, I too, ingested the materials submitted for this issue in this spirit of unknowingly. The process was creative, critical, intuitive, generative and reflective—all those buzz words of contemporary research—yet charged with substantial respect and curiosity for whatever unfolded, even if it went against the grain of what I had learned previously. For artists, designers, architects, musicians, and performers reading this journal issue, especially academics and students, this territory of inquiry may feel familiar to the creative experience and the increasing demands (and desires) to account for how one knows what one knows in the institutional setting. 'Explain yourself,' as the review or assessment criteria often states. If you are faced having to annotate your creative practice or to critically reflect on aspects that are so embedded in your making that you are unaware of them, I encourage you to look amongst the pages of this journal issue for examples of how others have grappled with that task such that the process is a space of coming to unknow and know, unknowingly.

There are a few people I would like to acknowledge before you read further. First, huge gratitude to the generosity of the peer reviewers, for the time and creative energy of guest editors Jondi Keane, Rea Dennis and Meghan Kelly (who have made the process so enjoyable and professional), for the expertise of the journal's copy editor Christina Houen and Graphic Designer Jo Bailey, and to AADR for helping to expand the journal's horizons.

Okay, readers, shake hands, consider yourself introduced, welcome into the *idea journal* house, and let's share a very scrumptious meal.

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I am forever grateful for what life in Aotearoa/ New Zealand brings. With roots stretching across the oceans to North America, Sweden, Wales and Croatia, I make my home between Kāpiti Island and the Tararua Ranges, and in Te Whanganui-A-Tara/ Wellington. I acknowledge the privilege that comes with being educated, employed, female and Pākehā, and the prejudices and injustices that colonialism has and continues to weigh on this land and its indigenous people. I am committed to on-going learning and practicing of Kaupapa Māori.

notes

01 Jondi Keane, 'An Arakawa and Gins Experimental Teaching Space; A Feasibilty Study,' *INFLeXions* 6 (2012), accessed 29 October 2020, http://www.inflexions.org/n6_keane.html.

02 Alan Watts, *Creating Who You Are* (Video) (n.d.), accessed 29 October 2020, https://vimeo.com/76888920.

03 Scott H. Young, 'The Art of Unlearning' (2018), accessed 29 October 2020, https://www.scotthyoung.com/blog/2018/04/12/the-art-of-unlearning/.

04 Young, 'The Art of Unlearning.'

sensing space: an exploration of the generation of depth and space with reference to hybrid moving image works and reported accounts of intense aesthetic experience

Sally McLaughlin
University of Technology, Sydney
0000-0001-8642-7539

abstract

This article draws on three hybrid moving image works—David Wilson's Moray *McLaren—We Got Time*, Christoph Niemann's *bike*, and Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*—to explore phenomenologist David Morris's theory that the perception of space arises from bodily processes that generate inner envelopes of depth and outer envelopes of space. A characteristic of these hybrid moving image works is that they set up spatial dynamics that interrupt dominant modes of spatial perception, allowing aspects of spatial perception that we might not otherwise notice to come to the fore.

The analysis demonstrates that the perceiver must hollow out envelopes of space around things for these things to show up as dimensional things that occupy their own space. The analysis demonstrates that a breakdown in the capacity to hollow out outer envelopes of space around things reveals the operation of inner envelopes of ambiguous depth where things flatten out or become diffuse, and can be subject to dramatic changes in scale and position. The analysis also demonstrates that the perceiver's sense of their own location in space can be disrupted by a breakdown in the ability to hollow out outer envelopes of space around things.

The article extends the discussion of the power of artworks to interrupt and reveal the dynamics of spatial perception through an examination of spatial aspects of reported accounts of intense aesthetic experience. These accounts include experiences of feeling unusually close to an artwork, or conversely, of feeling unusually distant from the work. I argue that these unusual spatial experiences can be explained as situations where ambiguous, plastic inner envelopes of depth have come to dominate perception.

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keywords:
space, perception, Merleau-Ponty, hybrid moving image, aesthetic experience

introduction

In *Sense of Space*,[01] David Morris develops a rich account of our perception of space. Based on the work of Merleau-Ponty and Bergson, Morris distinguishes between our ordinary experience of space and an extra-ordinary experience of depth, a depth which merges with our body's very being. Our ordinary experience of space evokes a sense that things out there are independent of us, occupying their own space, while we, the viewers, occupy a space of our own. Underlying this ordinary experience of space is a more primordial extra-ordinary experience of depth, where we perceive the world as colours and shapes that have become unmoored, or as diffuse atmosphere, and where one's own sense of being securely located in space may be undermined. Morris refers to the work of James Turrell, Stan Brakhage, and Michael Snow to draw attention to what happens when our sense of a thing having its own place breaks down. Space becomes abstract and diffuse. Surfaces and landscapes rotate and float by. An ambiguous sense of depth arises.

This article supplements Morris's account of our perception of space in two ways. First, I aim to show that the combination of live-action cinematography and hand-drawn graphics found in hybrid moving image works[02] can provide a rich point of entry into Morris's account, bringing to the fore the phenomenon of extra-ordinary depth, and allowing the viewer to pay attention to transitions between extra-ordinary depth and ordinary space. I discuss three works: David Wilson's in-camera praxinoscope animations from the music video *Moray McLaren—We Got Time*,[03] Christoph Niemann's *bike*,[04] and Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*.[05] The works are used as a resource to interrogate Morris's theory that our sense of space arises from bodily processes that generate inner envelopes of depth and outer envelopes of space.

Second, I draw on accounts of intense aesthetic experience reported by Höffding and Roald,[06] with a view to pursuing Morris's claim that perception is 'neither on the side of the perceiver or the side of the world, it is the cross between them.'[07] The hybrid works that are the focus of the first part of this paper rely on moving images. Motion is a strong perceptual cue. A concentrated focus on such works biases the analysis in favour of experiences of space and depth that are choreographed by currently available cues in the environment. Morris takes up Merleau-Ponty's insight that the body develops in conjunction with its environment. The depth that crosses a viewer with their environment develops over time and in particular places. It arises from developmental processes that attune the viewer to the particularities of their environment.[08] Höffding and Roald report on a wide range of experiences with art works, experiences that were nominated by participants in their research projects. Their paper provides examples of highly varied encounters with artworks, encounters that are dependent on the personal histories and circumstances of the participants in their projects. What is notable about Höffding and Roald's research are the unusual spatial dynamics that a number of participants in their projects reported. These dynamics

included experiences of feeling unusually close to an artwork, or conversely, of feeling unusually distant from the work. I will draw on these reports to expand my exploration of Morris's account of depth and space.

inner envelopes of depth and outer envelopes of space

The phenomenologist David Morris has developed a compelling account of embodied space, where our movement with the world creates inner envelopes of depth—a sense that I can place a thing (a marble, a tree) within bodily depth; and outer envelopes of space—where things have a sense of objective space, of being in a place of their own.[09] An outer envelope of space holds the body and the thing together. But it is also the condition that allows us to develop a sense of separation of our body from the thing. It provides us with a secure sense of our own location. It allows the thing, its zones, and its surfaces to peel away and to occupy a space that is distinct from one's own location.

Inner envelopes of depth are created as our body integrates the engagements of different parts of our body with each other. We have two eyes, yet we typically experience a sense of unity in our vision. We can reach out and touch with different parts of our body, yet we typically experience a unified sense of touch as well as a sense that our touch accords with our vision. The body integrates. Morris evokes a sense of the way that things that show up for us when inner envelopes of depth come to dominate our perception, making reference to these things as 'pre-objective things':

> The inner envelope is an envelope of pre-objective things, of things crossed with the body, things that have no objective status on their own, that can be felt as minuscule or enormous, near or distant depending on the way you handle them.[10]

Pre-objective things have a diminished sense of solidity—they float in an ambiguous relation to the perceiver. They are often diffuse, more atmosphere than thing. Morris describes the accompanying sense of depth as primordial depth[11] or extra-ordinary depth.[12] Things show up not as things but as part of the surface or the thickness of an inner envelope.

An outer envelope of space is 'outer' in that it depends on the prior operation of inner envelopes of depth. It is only when outer envelopes of space are being hollowed out around a thing from within the thickness of inner envelopes of depth, that things can take on an objective sense of being fully dimensional and of being located in their own space.[13] In order to draw attention to the distinctive modes of perception that arise when this process of generating outer envelopes of space is and isn't in play, I explore two hybrid moving image works that allow the viewer to catch themself in the process of making transitions between experiences that rely primarily on inner envelopes of depth, and experiences that rely on both depth and space.

David Wilson's music video *Moray McLaren—We Got Time*, is an animated exploration of cycles of life and death.[14] Wilson employs a

technology called a praxinoscope. Animations are drawn on a flat disc (the equivalent of an old 45 rpm record), which is then placed on a turntable. On top of the turntable is a circular configuration of sixteen mirrors angled to an almost vertical position. It is used to reflect the animations on the flat disc making them available to a viewer as almost vertical images.[15] The video documents the animated praxinoscope projections which are shot from a variety of angles.

The praxinoscope projections and the live-action documentation of those projections intervene in the presentation of objects, animals, and people, challenging our ordinary ways of perceiving things in space. These challenges make the work a valuable site for experiencing key aspects of the interplay between inner envelopes of depth and outer envelopes of space. The first challenge to our ordinary mode of perceiving things in space is posed by the speed of the animation. Some of the animations are drawn at 16 frames per revolution and thus align perfectly with each of the sixteen angled mirrors of the praxinoscope. This affords a relatively stable presentation of the animated image. Other animation sequences are drawn at 15 or 17 frames to create the illusion of forward or backward movement. The second challenge is introduced by the reflective, angled, ever-rotating mirrors. Each mirrored surface pushes forward into space then recedes, enhancing and sometimes detracting from reading the reflected animations as objective things. A third challenge is presented by the specific nature of the sequence of drawings that make up each of the animations. In some of the sequences, the viewer is afforded images of objects, animals, and people, primarily from a single perspective. This limits the viewer's capacity to perceive the subject matter as a fully dimensional thing. In others, the objects, animals, and people are rendered from multiple points of view, which tends to create a sense that the subject matter is rotating. Finally, there is the challenge posed by the live-action documentation, sometimes filmed in close-up, at other times, at a distance.

Under the right conditions, the viewer can readily perceive the hand-drawn illustrations as three-dimensional objective things. This occurs when the animations are drawn at 16 frames per second, occupying the stable centre of the frame; when the animations are moving in concert with the mirrored surface as it pushes forward and recedes; when the viewer is afforded multiple perspectives on the subject matter such that the relevant object, animal, or person seems to rotate, or at least move in ways that belong to the actions of that object, animal or person; and when the camera positions the viewer at an appropriate distance and an appropriate angle in relation to the subject matter. Under these circumstances, the viewer is afforded the opportunity of hollowing out envelopes of space around the subject matter such that it appears as a solid three-dimensional thing—an object, an animal, or a person—peeling back from the viewer and occupying its own zone of space. A particularly potent example of a thing that emerges under these conditions is the rotating seed. The advancing and receding praxinoscope mirrors enhance this sense of peeling back. On Morris's account, this peeling

back arises from the generation of outer envelopes of space. When the conditions are such that the thing can provide some resistance as it moves in relation to the viewer, the viewer hollows out envelopes of space around the subject matter, allowing a fully dimensional thing to emerge. This hollowing out of zones of space around the thing allows the viewer to locate that thing in a distinct place that is independent of themself.

> … the movement of my eyes toward the thing both unifies the thing and places it within bodily space … the thing continually 'peels' away from me … This becomes explicit when I move around the thing, or it moves relative to me, and it stays detached …The thing thus surpasses me and demands a unity in which its zones and surfaces peel back, envelop and consume one another in its own place.[16]

When any of these conditions change, however, the viewer can easily lose their sense of a three-dimensional objective thing. The animations flatten; at times they become relatively indistinct; the viewer no longer has a sense of a thing in its place. The inner envelopes come to the fore—marks, shapes and colours glide by, or they diffuse into backgrounds of ambiguous depth. It is mere surface or diffuse atmospheres of ambiguous thickness that come to the fore. The viewer no longer perceives individual objects, animals and people located securely in an articulated zone of space.

Moving between these different modes feels like an involuntary act on our part. It feels as though the conditions that are set up within the video determine whether we perceive the subject matter as a three-dimensional thing in its own place, or as atmospheric, less well-formed surface phenomena. Morris's account suggests that while it is movement on our part that generates inner envelopes of depth and outer envelopes of space, this movement arises from processes that operate below the level of awareness. There is a crossing of body and world where specific conditions that are set up within the video act in concert with the body's capacity to generate envelopes of depth and space such that we are seamlessly drawn into one mode of perception or another. The ease with which we can transition between these different modes of perception lends support to Morris's claim that the process of generating an outer envelope of space depends on the prior generation of inner envelopes of depth. Even in situations where we can clearly articulate a thing in its own space, as in the case of the rotating seed, the seed shows up as a figure against a diffuse background of ambiguous depth. The qualities of the background are consistent with Morris's description of the inner envelope of depth. The fact that these qualities are exhibited by the already present background supports Morris's claim that an outer envelope is outer in that it depends on the prior generation of inner envelopes of depth. The background is available to seamlessly absorb previously distinct things when the process of hollowing out outer envelopes of space around those things breaks down.

Wilson's work relies on a relatively complex combination of technologies. At the other end of the technology spectrum is Christoph Niemann's *bike*.[17] While Niemann was working with a film crew on the Netflix film *Abstract: Art of Design*, he sketched a bike with a rider on his car window. He then filmed this sketch through the car window as he was driven through streets in New York. Again, this short sequence of film provides some very interesting transitions between the sense that we are perceiving a thing that has its own place, and a sense that accords well with Morris's descriptions of the unmoored pre-objective things that arise from the generation of inner envelopes of depth.

When the conditions are right—when the bike is holding the road, moving at an appropriate speed, and in an appropriate trajectory in relation to people and traffic—the bike is readily accepted as a bike moving through streets in New York. But this illusion is easily broken. For example, at one point the car stops. The shake of the hand-held camera gives rise to a bike that appears to teeter. When the bike does not fall as expected, the viewer is made aware of the artifice—'Oh yes, it's just a sketch on a car window, not the real thing.' At times the bike holds the road, at other times it blends into the ambiguous depth of parked vehicles in the background. At times it undergoes dramatic, inexplicable changes in scale and seems to jump to very different locations in space. Each time the illusion is broken, the bike flattens or diffuses into the background. When it flattens, it shows up as a sketch on the car window. But then the situation is righted, the conditions once again allow the sketch to peel away, to occupy a zone of its own space, to cultivate a sense that the sketch is now a real thing in the street. The viewer is afforded a number of opportunities to catch themselves transitioning between a sketch that floats and a dimensional thing that holds its own place.

Both Wilson's and Niemann's work provide the viewer with opportunities to catch themselves as they transition from modes of engagement with the world where envelopes of depth and space are working together to generate an ordinary sense of space, and modes of engagement where the generation of outer envelopes of space is diminished, allowing the operation of inner envelopes of depth to come to the fore.

dislocation of the perceiver as a coming to the fore of inner envelopes of depth

We typically experience ourselves as being located in a distinct place in relation to that which is perceived. But this sense of being securely located in space must be maintained. In this section, I will explore the idea that a secure sense of one's own location is maintained through the generation of outer envelopes of space that secure things in a place.

A good example of the fragility of our sense of being located in a distinct place is the feeling of disorientation or even dislocation that arises from the rotoscope technique employed in Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*.[18] The film was originally shot on digital video as live action. A number of different artists worked on rotoscoping specific sections of

the film, drawing over key frames of the live action to create animated sequences. The animators' obvious intent was for the viewer to be made aware of this artifice—they revel in the juxtaposition of rhythms and paths of movement that undermine our expectations. Filmmaker Douglas Mann describes the resulting 'instability' as follows:

> If one were to describe the visual style in a single word, that word would be instability. In some scenes, we see a fairly stable human figure…surrounded by a fluid, undulating background of objects, buildings, and other characters. In others, the very components of human bodies and faces are out of sync with each other: a head remains stationary as its eyes and mouth move back and forth; elements of clothing change their shape or substance; a character's hair waves up and down without any evidence of windy weather elsewhere in the scene.[19]

The viewer's normal expectations about the movement of things, people, and body parts in relation to each other are thwarted. The impact of the rotoscoped sequences has been variously referred to as 'shimmering,' and 'trippy,'[20] but also 'eerily lifelike.'[21] The title *Waking Life* invites inevitable associations with dreams. There is a disconcerting lack of synchronicity in the trajectory of movement of various elements in the film. To the viewer's eyes, the actors and things in the film become unmoored; there are many instances where these actors and things do not quite hold their own space. The actors and things do not move predictably in relation to the viewer. Further, the viewer's own sense of stability is undermined. An uncanny sense of not being settled in one place develops. The feeling that the viewer cannot secure a firm sense of location for the things and actors in the film coincides with a sense that the viewer is experiencing some form of altered state.

Waking Life reveals that the capacity to hollow out zones of space in which things are securely located has implications for the viewer's sense of their own location. While it is an inner envelope of depth that integrates the diverse engagements of our body with the world, this integration is one that does not provide us with a sense of objective space. Instead, as Morris explains, the depth provided by the generation of an inner envelope is plastic:

> Depth has a 'sens' that does not smoothly quantify along a scale of objective measures, but is qualitatively articulated by the rhythms and sweeps of my enveloping body. All that is expressed is the 'sens' of a pre-objective, primordial depth, in which we might be able to, for example, specify broad distinctions between the hugely distant and the near…. the hugely distant expresses an opening or extension of the enveloping body in relation to the thing, while the near expresses a closing and retraction. But our sense of primordial depth could not on its own… give us a sense of objective depths between ourselves and things. With primordial depth we are caught

in the realm of the strange, plastic, and suddenly transformative depths that haunt us in dreams, in states of half-waking.[22]

Christoph Niemann's *bike* provides a clear demonstration of the plasticity of the sense of depth generated by inner envelopes. In those situations where the sketch of the bike no longer holds the road, when we can no longer hollow out a stable envelope of space around the bike, the bike flattens and transforms into a mere sketch, it is subject to dramatic changes in scale and changes in the sense of whether it is near or far. In *Waking Life* the viewer is constantly thrown back into a plastic sense of the relationship between themselves and the things portrayed in the film. The viewer is forced to orient and reorient themself in relation to these things. A plastic sense of their own orientation and location arises.

This analysis of *Waking Life* suggests that Morris's account of space has implications for our sense of our own location and our sense of continuity with phenomena that we encounter in the world. I will explore this claim with reference to an investigation of aesthetic experience by Höffding and Roald.[23] Höffding and Roald identify two types of dislocation of the self that occur in intense aesthetic experience—absorption and 'letting go.'[24] Höffding and Roald base their claims on interviews that occurred in the context of two different studies each with quite distinctive cohorts of interviewees.[25] The first group of interviewees were visitors to visual arts museums—the Esbjerg Museum of Art and the National Art Gallery, both in Denmark. They were asked to describe intense and memorable experiences of artworks. The second group were expert musicians—members of the Danish String Quartet (DSQ), a world-famous ensemble. The musicians were asked about their experiences of musical absorption.

The interview extracts and summaries reported by Höffding and Roald provide access to a range of encounters with works of art that extend well beyond that which might be elaborated through further analysis of hybrid moving image works. One of the characteristics of the hybrid works discussed above is that they employ moving images to draw us into particular modes of engagement with the works. Motion is a powerful visual cue. But Morris's commitment to the idea that bodily processes develop over time suggests that there is value in broadening the the inquiry to encounters with art works that are less dependent on the immediate environment and more dependent on the personal history and circumstances of the viewer[26] (or in the case of the expert musicians, the performer). A remarkable aspect of Höffding and Roald's investigation is the number of accounts that involve some form of unexpected dislocation that arises from the interviewee's encounter with a work of art. This suggests the possibility that our ordinary experience of being securely located in space may be interrupted by a wide range of perceptual cues, many of which are dependent on the personal history and circumstance of the viewer.

Many of the accounts reported by Höffding and Roald refer to spatial dynamics where

the museum visitor or the musician is drawn into the artwork or the performance; or experiences an unexpectedly close encounter with the work. One of the museum visitors reported a sense of 'being pulled into the picture.'[27] Another museum visitor described her typical engagement with artworks in galleries as a 'bombardment' of her senses, preferring nature to galleries for this reason. She also described a more positive affective engagement that arose from a chance encounter with a Barbara Hepworth sculpture—a happening that affected her like a 'bolt from the blue.'[28] One of the musicians described an experience of being 'in the tone,'[29] and of trying to avoid being forced 'into a tempo' such that they 'cannot get out of it.'[30] Höffding and Roald describe these experiences as examples of a 'fusion' of subject and object, making the claim that the 'boundary between self and other, object and subject, becomes porous and blurry.'[31]

Other accounts reflect a different spatial dynamic, where the viewer or the performer experiences an expansive sense of distance between self and work. A musician describes the feeling of overlooking a scene whilst engaged in an intense experience of performing:

> it is like… the feeling of looking over a large landscape and knowing that this landscape consists of insects and branches and roots and all kinds of things building up the whole thing, but you cannot see the individual parts, you just know that all of it is, contributes to the being and that you actually could affect the little things, but you don't want to because you want everything to be there and contribute.[32]

Somewhat counter to the experience cited previously, where the performer cannot get out of the tempo, here the performer is aware that he could 'affect little things' but does not want to. Also, worth noting, is the experience of surveying a large landscape, and the claim that you cannot 'see the individual parts,' perhaps alluding to something of a transition from ordinary space to extra-ordinary depth, where one no longer has a firm grasp of individual things in their place. Recall those sequences in *Moray McLaren—We Got Time* where the objects, animals and people, flatten and disperse, diffusing into gliding shapes and colours skimming across the rotating surfaces of the praxinoscope.

Höffding and Roald supplement this example of undergoing 'a certain spatial reorientation'[33] with a much more specific spatial account offered by a jazz musician, Kristian Jørgensen, cited in an earlier study by Höffding:

> You find yourself so much at ease in the situation, that you, it is someone else playing for you and you yourself are sitting out in the, you sit and enjoy the music back down behind the mixer [referring to the recording studio, where the producer mixes the recorded sound] with your feet up out in the control room and then it is just like, you've let go.[34]

Here the musician describes the experience as one of watching his own performance as

if from a certain location in the room (behind the mixer), when he himself was actually participating the performance in a different part of the room. Further, he no longer perceives himself as an active participant, but as someone looking on to the performance. In the case of this musician, there is a reported sense of ease, of letting go. There is continuity in the (dis)location of the musician—the location of the musician is stable but unusual—possibly reflecting a continuity in the particular mode of engagement with the music experienced by the musician.

The previous analysis of *Waking Life* indicates that interruptions to the smooth operation of outer envelopes can cause a sense of dislocation on the part of the perceiver. The process of hollowing out envelopes of space around things—to articulate those things as dimensional objects and to secure them in place—influences the perceiver's own sense of being securely located in a particular place. The analysis of *bike* and *Moray McLaren—We Got Time* demonstrates that when the generation of outer envelopes is compromised, inner envelopes come to the fore. The analysis of bike also demonstrates that the sense of depth opened up by inner envelopes is plastic. A weakening of the generation of outer envelopes of space would account for the unusual and varied spatial experiences reported in Höffding and Roald's study of aesthetic experience. On the one hand, there are reports of viewers and musicians being drawn into particularly close encounters with a work. On the other, there are reports of a more expansive sense of distance between the musicians and the work. These experiences would seem to reflect the plasticity of the sense of depth that arises when inner envelopes come to the fore.

Changes in the perception of depth can at times be abrupt, but at other times they are much more stable, perhaps reflecting a degree of continuity in the level of engagement of a perceiver with the work. In Höffding and Roald's study, it was the museum visitors who reported the more abrupt spatial encounters with the works. The musicians reported unusual spatial encounters that were fluid or stable, but rarely abrupt.

One final account from a musician participating in Höffding and Roald's study is worth considering from the perspective of Morris's account of the perception of space and depth:

> The deeper you are in, the less you observe the world around you… and I had this especially powerful experience… where I completely disappeared. I remember that it was an incredibly pleasant feeling in the body. And it was incredibly strange to come back and at that point I spent a few seconds to realise where I had been. I had been completely gone and with no possibility of observing… It was this intense euphoric joy.[35]

'No possibility of observing' suggests that there are no things located in space to observe. It also suggest a distortion or possible absence of depth. The experience of disappearing would seem to align well

with the suspension of the generation of space and a distortion or suspension of the generation of depth. This account of complete disappearance lends credence to the idea that, in order for depth and space to be experienced, depth and space must be generated. Depth and space are not phenomena that are out there, ready made in the world. Depth and space arise from the crossing of body and world through enveloping processes of the body.

closing remarks

This paper has argued that artworks have a role to play in interrupting and revealing the dynamics of spatial perception. The bodily processes involved in the perception of space and depth are background processes. They arise through the interaction of body and world. They are not consciously initiated by the perceiver, and they typically operate below the level of awareness. As such, they are difficult to access.

The hybrid moving image works discussed in this paper are a potent resource for accessing the otherwise difficult-to-access processes involved in the generation of perceived space and depth. They are works that rely heavily on movement. Movement plays a powerful role in visual perception. The hybrid nature of the works gives rise to interesting phenomena, relevant to an exploration of ordinary space and extra-ordinary depth.

David Wilson's *Moray McLaren—We Got Time* and Christoph Niemann's *bike* juxtapose situations where the viewer can hollow out envelopes of space around the subject matter, with situations where the viewer's attempts to maintain these outer envelopes of space break down. These works provide the viewer with ample opportunity to catch themselves as they transition between ordinary modes of engaging with space, where we perceive things as being dimensional and occupying their own zone of space; and extra-ordinary experiences of depth, where things flatten or become diffuse, and where they no longer occupy a secure space of their own. Analysis of differences in the conditions that give rise to those sequences where the viewer perceives ordinary space, as opposed to those where the viewer perceives extra-ordinary depth, lends credence to Morris's claim that the generation of ordinary space involves the generation of envelopes of space that give rise to things in their place, providing them with a sense of dimensionality. Recall the rotating seed *in Moray McLaren—We Got Time* or the bike that holds its own place on the road in *bike*. The analysis of these works also lends credence to Morris's characterisation of inner envelopes of depth as giving rise to experiences where things flatten out or become diffuse, and where there is a plasticity to the viewer's sense of depth. Recall the way in which the dimensional things of *Moray McLaren—We Got Time* flatten out to become marks, colours and shapes, or in some instances diffuse completely into a background of ambiguous depth; and the way in which Niemann's *bike* flattens out to a sketch and becomes subject to dramatic changes in perceived position and scale. Finally, analysis of the experience of transitioning between these different modes of space and depth lends support to Morris's claim that the process of

generating outer envelopes of space depends on the prior generation of inner envelopes of depth. An outer envelope is outer in that it builds on inner envelopes. Recall the ambiguous thickness and diffuse nature of the backgrounds in *Moray McLaren—We Got Time* and the availability of those backgrounds to seamlessly absorb previously distinct things when the process of hollowing out outer envelopes of space around those things breaks down. Recall the way in which Nieman's bike can momentarily diffuse into the ambiguous depths of the parked vehicles in the background. These ambiguous depths of the background are always already in play prior to the generation of outer envelopes of space, ready to absorb previously articulated things when the viewer can no longer hollow out envelopes of space around those things, such that they hold their own space and stand out from the background.

Analysis of Richard Linklater's *Waking Life* demonstrates a connection between the viewer's capacity to establish a secure sense of a thing in its place and the viewer's own sense of being securely located in a particular space. In *Waking Life,* the generation of outer envelopes of space around objects is continuously thwarted. The viewer can never quite move in relation to things such that they peel back from the viewer in predictable ways. The things of *Waking Life* take on an uncanny quality, but the viewer also becomes unsettled, unable to be certain about their own location in space. The analysis of *Waking Life* opens up a connection to the unusual spatial dynamics reported by Höffding and Roald in their exploration of intense aesthetic experience. These unusual spatial dynamics can be broadly classified into two categories: those in which the viewer feels that they are unusually close to the work or that the work is unusually close to them; and those in which they feel an unusual sense of distance from the work. Both of these spatial dynamics can be accounted for as a weakening of the generation of envelopes of space such that the viewer finds themselves in a depth that is dependent primarily on the generation of inner envelopes. Some support for the claim that intense aesthetic experience might entail a weakening of the generation of envelopes of space, and possibly even depth, comes from a musician participating in Höffding and Roald's study who reported a sense of completely disappearing, and of being unable to observe anything during the course of a particularly affecting performance. This experience suggests a complete breakdown in the generation of space and a distortion in, or suspension of, the generation of depth as well.

Taken together, the analysis of the hybrid moving image works and the analysis of the reported account of aesthetic experience indicate that Morris's account of the processes involved in generating our sense of space and depth is a rich resource that should have application to a wide range of art and design practices. The analysis also indicates the potential of artworks to reveal areas of further enquiry with regard to the nature of experience when our ordinary mode of engagement with space breaks down.

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author biography

Dr Sally McLaughlin is a visual communication design academic. She is interested in accounts of the generation of sense that foreground action rather than thought as our primary mode of engagement in the world.

Sally has published on topics including information design, metaphor, design expertise and qualitative inquiry in design. She has supervised projects that explore embodied experience as it plays out in practices of perceiving, designing and making.

notes

01 David Morris, *The Sense of Space* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

02 'Within moving image culture these works would be referred to as 'hybrid media.' Hybrid media is a term used to refer to the integration of live-action cinematography with other visual elements (graphics, still photography, animation, 3D computer animation, or typography). See: Lev Manovich, 'Understanding Hybrid Media', manovich.net, 2007: 1, accessed 22 September 2020, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/055-understanding-hybrid-media/52_article_2007.pdf. Originally published in ed. Betti-Sue Hertz, Animated Paintings (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2007).

03 David Wilson, *Moray McLaren—We Got Time*, YouTube video, 3:55, April 16, 2009, accessed 21 July 2020, https://youtu.be/j9e38cuhnaU.

04 Christoph Niemann, *bike,* YouTube video, 2:30, March 2, 2017, accessed 21 July 2020, https://youtu.be/MAxPvKa8jUs.

05 Richard Linklater (Director), *Waking Life* [Motion Picture]. (United States: Thousand Words, 2001).

06 Simon Høffding & Tone Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience: Husserlian and Enactive Perspectives,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology* 6, no. 1 (2019): 1-20, https://doi.org/10.1080/20539320.2019.1589042.

07 Morris, *The Sense of Space,* 28

08 Morris, *The Sense of Space,* 33-34.

09 Morris, *The Sense of Space,* 117-124.

10 Morris, *The Sense of Space*, 118.

11 Morris, *The Sense of Space,* 118.

12 Morris, *The Sense of Space,* 3-4.

13 Merleau-Ponty describes the process by which a visible (a thing) is made available to us in our ordinary mode of engagement with the world as one where a 'given visible' hollows out a zone of space: `a given visible, properly disposed … hollows itself out [*se creuse*] in an invisible sense.'* This description suggests that the agency of hollowing out belongs to the thing. Morris's work refines this claim, making it clear that it is the movement of the thing in relation to the viewer that gives rise to the the emergence of a thing in its place.**
* Maurice Merleau-Ponty 'Working note, July 1959,' in *The Visible and the Invisible / Working Notes*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1968), 200.
** Morris, *The Sense of Space*, 28

14 Wilson, *Moray McLaren—We Got Time*.

15 David Wilson, Making Of... Moray McLaren—We Got Time, YouTube video, 2:14, April 17, 2009, accessed 21 July 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4LSg7f4lFs

16 Morris, *The Sense of Space, 123.*

17 Niemann, *bike.*

18 Richard Linklater (Director), *Waking Life* [Motion Picture]. (United States: Thousand Words, 2001).

19 Douglas Mann, 'Buddhists, Existentialists, and Situationists: Waking up in Waking Life,' *Journal of Film and Video* 62, no. 4 (2010): 15-30, https://doi.org/10.1353/jfv.2010.0008.

20 Fox Searchlight Features, *Waking Life—Trailer* YouTube video 1:56, July 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbPgprcMtjo.

21 Roger Ebert, 'Waking Life—Review,' *Rogerebert.com,* 2001, accessed 20 October 2020, https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/waking-life-2001.

22 Morris, *The Sense of Space*, 120. Note that Morris adopts the French term 'sens' rather than sense to evoke the multiple connotations of the French term. 'Sens' suggests a link between meaning, direction and the senses. See Morris, *The Sense of Space*, 24.

23 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 3.

24 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 18.

25 The first set of interviews were collected in the context of an ongoing research project on aesthetic experience with visual arts at Esbjerg Museum of Art as well as the National Art Gallery in Denmark. The second set of interviews were collected in the context of a study of musical absorption. The interviews were conducted with members of the Danish String Quartet (DSQ), a world-famous ensemble. Höffding and Roald note that while 'the experience of visiting a museum cannot be contained within the same category as that of performing as a professional musician,' the decision to draw on both sets of interviews was driven by the structural similarities between the two activities, in particular the reported accounts of feeling that one was 'undergoing an experience that one did not initiate.' See: Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 3-4. Like David Morris, Höffding and Roald work at the intersection of phenomenology and cognitive science. They are working within a tradition that acknowledges and celebrates the interplay between different modes of perception. Relationships between musical experience and visual perception have been explored by leading phenomenologists, including Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. For an exposition of Merleau-Ponty's exploration of relationships between musical experience and visual perception, see: Jessica Wiskus, *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature and Music after Merleau-Ponty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

26 By invoking the concept of 'personal histories and circumstances,' I am not referring to isolated individuals cut off from others. Openness to environments implies openness to others. Openness to environments implies openness to language, artefacts, and practices that have been taken over and adapted from others. Further, the body of the individual is shaped by dynamics including genetics and developmental processes that precede the existence of an individual organism. The term 'personal history and circumstances' should be taken to include crossings of the body with environments that arise from interpersonal and pre-personal dynamics.

27 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 3.

28 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 11.

29 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 6.

30 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 6.

31 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 9-10.

32 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 6.

33 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 6.

34 Høffding, S. *A Phenomenology of Musical Absorption.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 157.

35 Höffding and Roald, 'Passivity in Aesthetic Experience,' 7.