Constructure:

Greenhouse, green screen, house, shelter, projection screen, wall-screen, home, stage, movie set, health spa…

MFA Terminal Project Report

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At First Sight

"Imagine an eye unruled by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colours are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of "Green"? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of colour. Imagine a word before the "beginning was the word."

-Stan Brakhage, *Metaphors on Vision*[1]

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[1] Danchev, Alex. "Stan Brakhage: Metaphors on Vision (1963)." *100 Artists' Manifestos.* London: Penguin, 2011. Print.

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 The projected image of grass is an homage to Brakhage. The visual pun of "green house" plays on the structure's function as a place of protection, nurture, control, and care. I also draw from my own childhood memory of seeing the image of the house or barn in the middle of a grass field inside of the autorefractor at the ophthalmologist's, when I was undergoing rigorous treatment for multiple vision disorders that caused my brain to stop acknowledging and interpreting information received by my eyes. My brain could not reconcile what my eyes saw into a clear 3-dimensional image due to a discrepancy between the refractive power in my eyes. The world I saw was overlapped, with forms merging together creating indeterminacy and alternate possibilities.

The wall is a screen, allowing the projection to fall on it and through its translucent surface, and at the same time acts as a concealment device, blurring and obscuring whatever is behind it. From the outside, viewers can voyeuristically see the shadows of things that the wall-screens are concealing, and upon entering become the subject of seeing. The door, usually a portal and

threshold that connects the exterior and interior, is locked and inaccessible in this case. From the vantage point of the viewer approaching the house, the open back wall is hidden out of their direct sightline. Once discovered, the opening will generously allow access to anyone who turns the corner.

Considering the shadows in Plato's allegory of the cave as one of the earliest written documents of a description of a projection, if the "reality" that we attribute to the things of our visual perception are just apparitions and tricks of the light, then is there value in such images? Along with the idea of aesthetics and visual beauty as considered as a "surface" projected on the exterior of form, can it prove to be generative and of value? How can formal characteristics and aesthetic strategies be used to evoke multiple interpretations that oscillate between poles through phenomenological experiences? How would indeterminacy in the work make the observer aware of the active and subjective nature of seeing?

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Time

A study that analyzed the Oxford English Corpus, a text corpus of 21st century English which contains nearly 2.5 billion words based on material collected mostly from the World Wide Web, including text used in literature, professional journals, online news articles, blogs, and social media, revealed that "time" is the most used noun in the English language.[2] For all this talk about time, it would seem like humans should have a good understanding of what time is.

> For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who even in thought can comprehend it, even to the pronouncing of a word concerning it? But what in speaking do we refer to more familiarly and knowingly than time? And certainly we understand when we speak of it; we understand also when we hear it spoken of by another. What, then, is time? If no one ask of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not. Yet I say with confidence, that I know that if nothing passed away, there would not be past time; and if nothing were coming, there would not be future time; and if nothing were, there would not be present time. Those two times, therefore, past and future, how are they, when even the past now is not; and the future is not as yet? But should the present be always present, and should it not pass into time past, time truly it could not be, but eternity. If, then, time present — if it be time — only comes into existence because it passes into time past, how do we say that even this is, whose cause of being is that it shall not be — namely, so that we cannot truly say that time is, unless because it tends not to be?
>
> St. Augustine of Hippo[3]

WE LIVE IN TIME AND TIME LIVES IN US

Chronobiology is a branch of biology that looks at the cyclic or periodic phenomena in living organisms and their physiological rhythms. It examines the internal clock of organisms and how it relates to external stimuli of our world and the cyclical processes of nature. The natural physiological rhythm and cyclical phenomena in living organisms occur for essential biological activities such as eating, sleeping, migration, mating, and cellular regeneration, etc. Not limited

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[2] "UK | The Popularity of 'time' Unveiled." *BBC News*. BBC, 22 June 2006. Web. 22 June 2017.
[3] St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* lib xi, cap xiv, sec 17 (ca. 400 CE)

to humans and animals, the rhythm of these biological processes can also be found in plants (affecting plant movements, photosynthesis) and microorganisms (e.g. fungi, bacteria, and protozoa). An almost 24-hour cycle (a solar day on earth) determined by physiological processes in living organisms creates the circadian rhythm with the circadian clock—a biochemical oscillator that coordinates a fluctuating relationship to solar time. When in synchronization, the circadian clock within us allows for coordination of our biological processes and behavior with external environmental changes of the 24-hour-day cycle. Light, the most influential to the circadian rhythm, is partnered by other external cues such as temperature, signaling to turn on and off the genes that control the internal clock.

The circadian clock consists of "biological clocks" and a "master clock". The biological clocks are groupings of interacting cell molecules in the body of the living organism, and the master clock, a group of 20,000 some nerve cells in the hypothalamus of the brain. These nerve cells, called the suprachiasmatic nucleus, or SCN, are located just above the optic nerves. The SCN therefor receives information from the eye about incoming light, and sends directions to the physiology control of the organism, releasing hormones, adjusting body temperature, and affecting sleep-wake cycles. We are time-regulated.

German scientist Till Roenneberg explains that unlike other living organisms that also possess biological clocks, modern human beings are not only regulated by the internal circadian clock and the external schedule of the sun, but are also governed by "social time," which used to be synched to the availability of natural daylight. With the explosion of modernization, urbanization, and globalization, we have replaced the local time that was aligned to the sun with a standardized, globalized time zone system, and our social activities are no longer restricted to the availability of daylight. [4] Our internal clock is entrained—biochemically synchronized—to sun time through melanopsin, a photoreceptor in our retina. With the modern woman's increased indoor time (thus decreased sun-time) and more frequent exposure to artificial light, the amplitude (difference between) light and darkness has diminished since

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[4] Roenneberg, Till. *Internal Time: Chronotypes, Social Jet Lag, and Why You're So Tired*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2012. Print. Page 1-3

the preindustrial days. Roenneberg describes the modern human beings as living in "constant twilight".[5]

Someone of good health has circadian rhythms that are "in synch" with the 24-hour day, the rising and setting of the sun, and the rising and falling of temperature. Someone suffering from sleep disorders, the blind, and those who have lesions to the brain, can experience this "constant twilight" in a more palpable way, where it is sometimes hard to distinguish between the states of sleep and wakefulness.
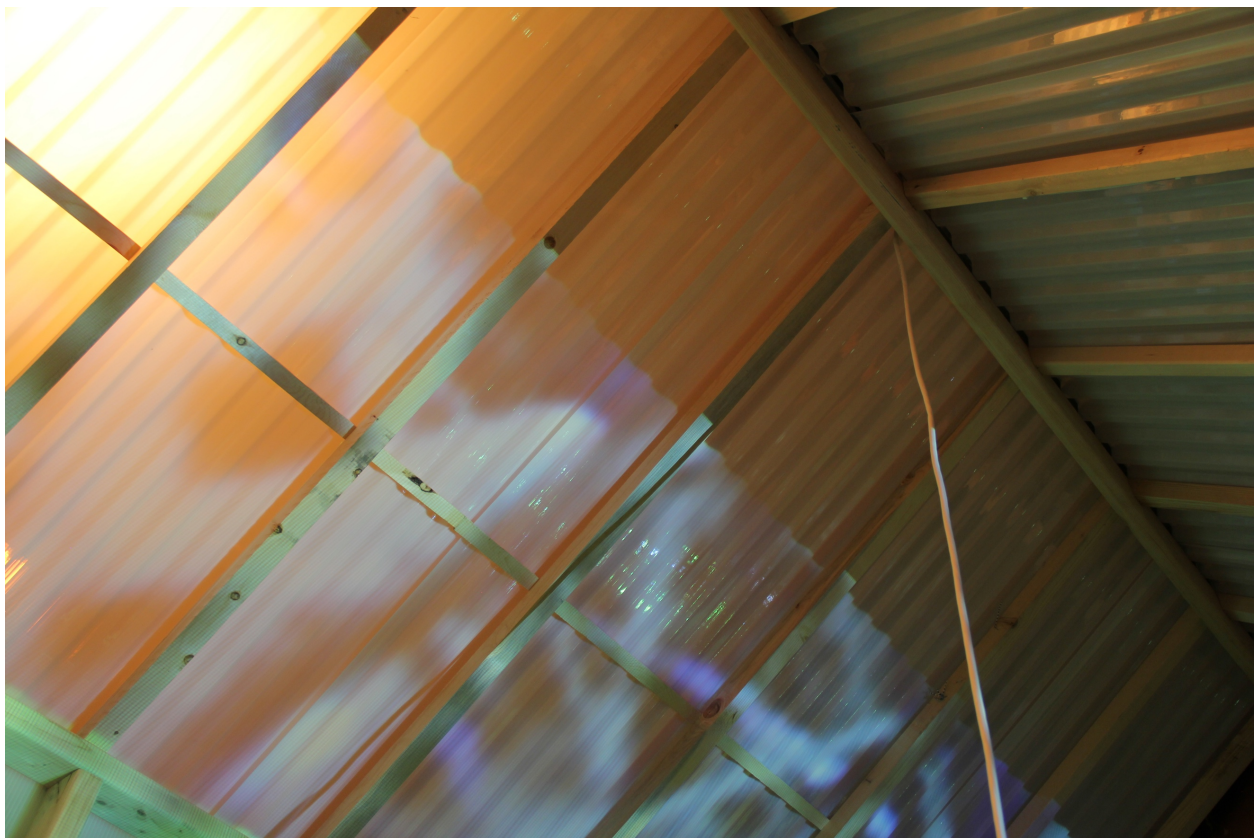
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Bergson says in *Matter and Memory*, "What I call 'my present' has one foot in my past, and another in the future."[6] As the representation of time gets jumbled, past becomes present and

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[5] Roenneberg, Till. *Internal Time: Chronotypes, Social Jet Lag, and Why You're So Tired*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012. Print. Page 164.

[6] Bergson, Henri, Nancy Margaret Paul, and Mary E. Dowson. *Matter and Memory*. Kent: Solis, 2014. Print. Page 177.

vice versa. Being in "constant twilight" is like being in a taffy time machine where time is mercilessly stretched and pulled and compressed. Time becomes indeterminate as one falls out of sync with one's own internal clock.


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Projected on the walls of the structure, abstracted images of grass slowly change over time—from clear to blurry and warm- to cool-temperatured and vice versa—but not so slow that it is undetectable to the 21st century eye. The "screen" fluctuates between a computer screen, a wall where the projected greenery could be on either side of, and a "green" screen where any image could be inserted. Above the structure is a stage light pointing at it with an amber gel to simulate sunlight. The "sunlight" travels through the translucent roof and bathes the single chair in the corner in a warm amber glow, in a way turning the entire structure into a walk-in "happy light" therapy lamp (a lightbox that emulates daylight to help regulate melatonin production and improve mood, energy, and concentration).

James Turrell, *Meeting*, 1980-86/2016

In James Turrell'e earlier work such as the Skyspaces series, and in his magnum opus Roden Crater, he uses the natural light of the sky. It changes very slowly to a point that the viewer doesn't realize the change. "Video, or actually anything computerized, doesn't seem to me to be able to change slowly enough to compete with that," remarks theorist and art critic Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe.[7] Upon encountering Turrell's more recent work, *"Breathing Light,"* Gilbert-Rolfe commented on how he became "accustomed to" and came to sense, the rate of change. Unlike the isolated rectangle of the changing sky, this is a change and movement that can be perceived, therefor contains no mystery.

[7] Gilbert-Rolfe, Jeremy. "Abstract Video." *Abstract Video: The Moving Image in Contemporary Art*. By Gabrielle Jennings. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015. Print. Page 66-80.
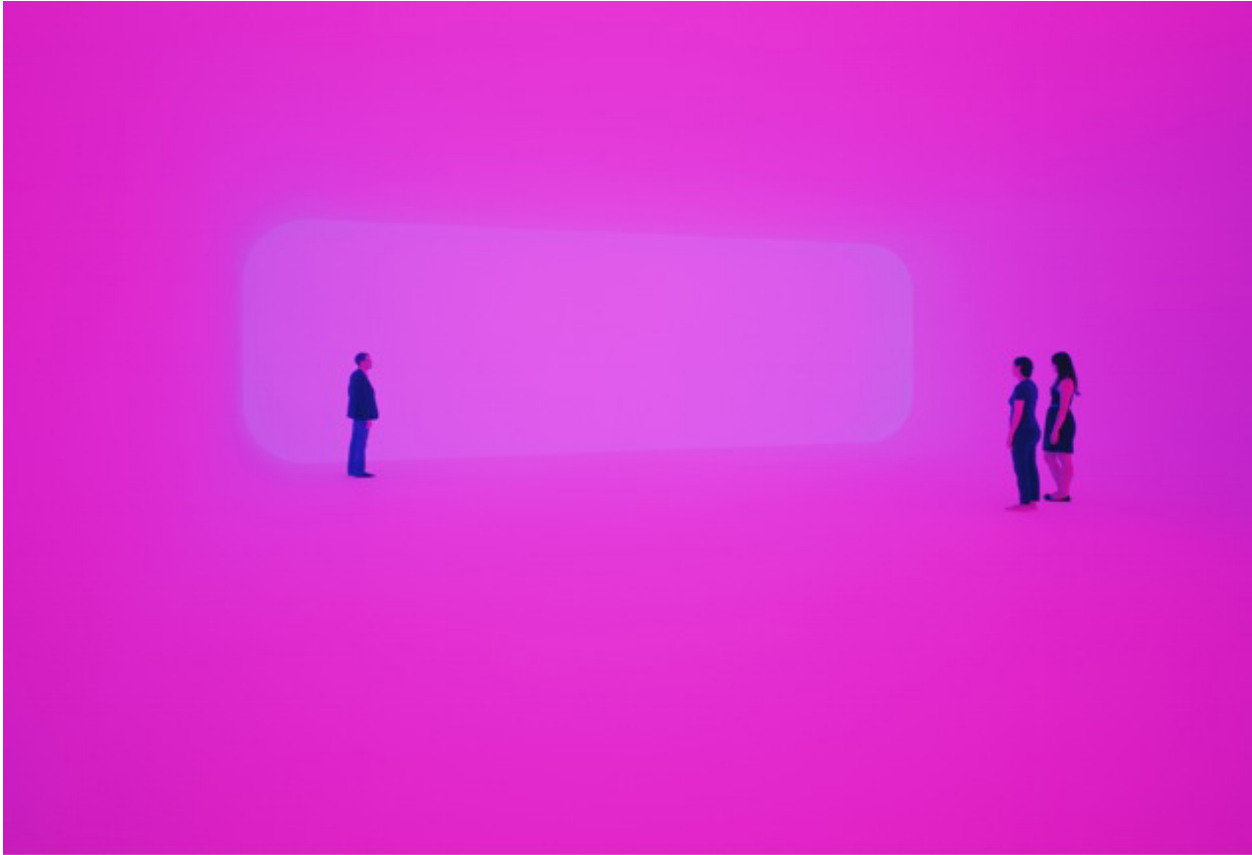
James Turrell, "*Breathing Light*," 2013

In my work, the image's rate of change is slow, in intentionally noticeable increments, and laggy. The subject of the projected image, the grass, does not change; what changes is the sharpness of the images as well as their color temperature. Whereas the level of clarity may indicate the distance of space in between each still, the changes in color temperature signal the distance in time, as different temperatures in lighting provide us with cues as to what time of day it may be. In contrast to what Turrell may have been trying to achieve, I am making apparent the changes and shifts in between each frame/still so that the viewer can recognize this active process of perception, recognition, and interpretation that involves automatic and rapid activity conducted by the eye and brain, while voluntarily choosing to participate in this exercise in perception, memory, and interpretation.

Thinking once again about the "constant twilight" and the confusion on our body caused by inconsistent and paradoxical exposure of natural (outdoor) and artificial (indoor) light, the late-1970s and early 1980s timed performance pieces by Taiwanese-born artist Sam (Tehching)

Hsieh come to mind as they bring to light the uncontainability of time, something that we try to quantify or contain, but nevertheless fail to grasp in a Sisyphus-like fashion. In Hsieh's "*Time Clock Piece*" (1980-1981), he attempts at containment and confinement of his physical body within his studio, as well as of time by incrementally marking time by punching a time clock every hour, never sleeping or leaving his studio for more than 59 minutes. "It was like being in limbo, just waiting for the next punch," he recalls of the experience.[8] The act of drawing boundaries and making distinctions resulted in the muddling of the river of time, making it all the more indeterminate. The loop of sequenced still images in my piece insinuate the pattern of light in the period of a day, with the rising and falling of colour temperature mimicking the rising and falling of the sun, and of our chest, of breath. The exclusion of the fourth wall of the "green house" allows the projected light to spill onto the exterior spaces. Time cannot be contained.

Tehching Hsieh, "*Time Clock Piece*," 1980-81

[8] Marks, Kathy. "Tehching Hsieh: The Man Who Didn't Go to Bed for a Year." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 29 Apr. 2014. Web. 20 June 2017.

Tehching Hsieh, *"Cage Piece,"* 1978-79

Hsieh's performances not only test the artist's physical and psychological endurance, but also his endurance of time, of lived time where every single minute is felt and lived. For Hsieh's 1978-1979 *"Cage Piece,"* he spent a year in near-solitary confinement in a cage he built in his studio, furnished only with a bed, a blanket, a sink, and a pail. He was voluntarily restrained from activities that allow us to pass time, and to experience "social time," such as talking, reading, writing, listening to the radio, or watching TV. It seems that, especially in today's digital technology and social media-saturated world, the mere thought of Hsieh's performances would be enough to induce anxiety in any swipe-happy person. What one cannot tolerate may actually be non-distracted time, or the lack of "social time". When speaking on the condition of boredom, art historian and critic James Elkins commented that it is "about two hundred years old, young by historical standards...younger than Titian or Rembrandt," and that boredom is "part of our modern middle class malaise, a sign of our anxiety, of the fragmentation of our lives, of our compulsive need for continuous, intensive distractions...We're impatient. We're easily bored."[9] We "pass" time, in order to "bypass" time.

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[9] Elkins, James. "Are Artists Bored by Their Work?" *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 15 Dec. 2010. Web. 15 June 2017.

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Perception

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, perception is most commonly used to mean:

1. a: a result of perceiving: observation

    b: a mental image: concept.

2. a: awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation

    b: physical sensation interpreted in the light of experience[10]

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[10] "Perception." Def.I & II. *Merriam-Webster*.com. Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, 2017. Web. 24 April. 2017.

In Psychology and Zoology, perception describes the neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli. What seems to be implied here is an entity, a form, a body wherein there is a boundary between the external and the internal. There is a process of inputting and outputting, all happening within nanoseconds as external information and stimuli enter in through our senses, and into the brain where it is processed and interpreted, then projected back onto the outside world, where the cycle continues.

PERCEPTION IS PROJECTION

In Jungian psychology, we all have a shadow self that is made up of elements of our personalities that we don't like. To avoid facing our own shadows, we project them onto others and hence the world outside us becomes only a reflection of the world within us. We cannot perceive anything outside of ourselves that is not us. "Everyone carries a shadow," wrote Jung, "and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is."[11] The shadow may appear in dreams and visions, and one's interaction with his own shadow in dreams may reveal the state of mind one's in. Perception is an outcome of an organism. We give birth to ourselves.

We have always been fascinated by shadows. Inside the science museum, children hold poses in front of a large wall covered with phosphor, which when exposed to a strobe flash will temporarily "remember"/store light. Children watch in fascination as they see their own shadows frozen in time on the wall.

This synthetic fluorescent or phosphorescent substance is also used to coat a different kind of "wall"—the screens of cathode ray tubes, a high-vacuum tube in which cathode rays produce a luminous image on a fluorescent screen, and was widely used in televisions and computer terminals. According to media archeologist and historian Erkki Hutamo, the screen is

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[11] C. G., Jung. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 11: Psychology and Religion: West and East*. Edited by Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1969. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hhr4b.

something that conceals and protects.[12] These screens are walls that we hide behind, through which we see others, the world outside of us, from the interiors of our homes, or ourselves, our psyche.

The walls of the structure become mirrors when the viewers' shadows are projected onto it. From the exterior, shadows of objects hang from the studs—a hammer, a staple gun, a towel, and a magnifying glass. Concealed behind the "screen", however, are not the objects just described but plaster replicas. To those watching from the exterior, the shadows are more "real" than the thing itself. (As seen on T.V.)

SEEING WITH THE MIND

Psychologist Richard Gregory's top-down perception theory maintains that perception is a constructive, interpretive, and indirect process, where hypotheses are suggested and tested by our sensory data based on prior knowledge.[13] Our sensory system will continue to test these hypotheses even when they cannot be correct. Visual illusions form when multiple hypotheses are equally plausible, resulting in us seeing something that may not actually be present. Gregory posits that the process of perception is "a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data," and that it involves "going beyond the immediately given evidence of the senses".[14] This means that when we receive stimulus information from the world around us, which is often incomplete and ambiguous (Gregory estimates that 90% of information is lost by the time it reaches the brain), we rely on our higher cognitive information such as stored knowledge or past experiences to make speculations and reach a conclusion.

Perceptual set theory describes our tendency to focus our attention on certain aspects of the available sensory data and ignore others. Factors such as expectations, motivation, culture, and

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[12] Hutamo, Erkki, "Elements of Screenology: Toward an Archaeology of the Screen", in *ICONICS: International Studies of the Modern Image*, Vol.7 (2004), pp.31-82. Tokyo: The Japan Society of Image Arts & Sciences.

[13] Hill, Grahame. *A Level Psychology Through Diagrams.* New York: Oxford, 2001. Print. Page 125.

[14] Gregory R.L. 1966. *Eye and Brain: the psychology of seeing.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; 5th edition 1997, Oxford University Press/Princeton University Press. Print.

emotion affect our perception, making this an active process that requires selection, inference, and interpretation based on our past experiences.

Perception is an interplay between information that you're getting immediately from your senses and prior knowledge that you use to interpret that information. When presented with multiple shapes that may have possible connections to each other, the viewer's mind starts to construct and test the hypotheses that resulted from their prior experiences.

Of course, there is not only one way to "see," as a once severely nearsighted and cross-eyed boy would one day become the great visionary, Buckminster Fuller. Through his blurry vision, Fuller saw nature's designs in a very different way, which etched in his mind the patterns that would one day make him famous. Defected perception turned into perfected reception. Impressionist painters Claude Monet and Edgar Degas have also been used as examples by researchers and ophthalmologists as artists who created their art in a unique "vision" due to their eye diseases and inability to perceive with normal vision.[15] Even within one individual, one entity, there can be discrepancies in perception such as in the case of strabismus and anisometropia patients (both of which I'm affected by), where two eyes refuse to work together, making it difficult or near-impossible for the brain to interpret and project three-dimensional forms that don't overlap. The two identically branded and modeled projectors used in my piece are placed on the floor, intentionally conspicuous with all the trappings, power cords, and extension cords that connect them to the power/electricity source made visible. Placed side-by-side, the two projectors are physical metaphors of our two eyes. Due to the two projectors being "of the same but different," even as they project the same video images, there is often a discrepancy and desynchronization in terms of colour temperature, sharpness, position, and refresh rate. The shadows that are cast by the projected video light from the two projectors therefor create a "double shadow," one slightly bluer and the other greener. The artifacts of the projected video images of magnified grass make apparent the pixels that make up the recognizable, representational image. As the viewer walks closer to the projected image on the wall, the more blurry, or abstract the image becomes, until all one sees is individual square

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[15] Marmor, Michael F. "Ophthalmology and Art: Simulation of Monet's Cataracts and Degas' Retinal Disease." *JAMA Ophthalmology*. American Medical Association. Dec. 1, 2006.

pixels slowly changing in formation to create the grass that is not actually really there, that is eventually obscured further by the approaching shadow of the beholder.

When we wish to see all but ourselves, we appoint a substitute, a surrogate, to interact with the world. Cindy Sherman, being an artist from the Picture Generation of the 1970 and 80s, a group of photographers and video artists who used appropriation and montage to uncover the constructed nature of images in a media-saturated age, she draws on the plethora of images and archetypes from films, TV, art history, magazines, and the Internet to explore the concept of perception, identity, and representation, which has resulted in a wide range of personas and identities, each depending on the viewer's own perception and interpretation (especially when Sherman often leaves her photographs untitled). Having used herself as a model in her photographs for over thirty years, Sherman also takes on multiple roles in making her art—as director, actress, make-up artist, photographer, lighting designer, wardrobe mistress, and hairdresser. Sherman is both a participant as well as a critic of our mass consumer culture, both the viewer and the viewed, challenging and subverting it while taking part in it. Through using her body to channel various adopted personas, Sherman examines how what we do, how we dress, what we spend our money on and what we consume (the perceived external factors and façades) shape our identity as individuals as well as a community and culture (internal factors). What we see is who we are. As is in the literal sense in my piece when the viewer perceives the projection of her own shadow, and in the figural sense when the viewer perceives the arrangement of objects in the interior space, making their own interpretations and connections based on what they know and have experienced.

Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still #56, 1980

The Projected Image

Curator Chrissie Iles observed in 2003 that in contemporary art, projected images are most often shown in galleries, which removes them from the cinematic setting. She remarks that unlike video artists of the 1970's who were intentionally making the viewer aware of the gallery space, many contemporary film and video installations don't usually consider the gallery space as part of the conceptual structure of the piece. She cites Gary Hill as a video artist that engages "both space and our retinal perception of images" and focus our attention on the space its relationship to the moving images.[16] Art historian and critic Hal Foster goes further to say that the "rampant pictorialism" and virtualism of projected images today makes it feel as if they don't care about the actual space, or if the viewer is there or not. "This is beyond disembodiment," he argues, "It's habituating us to a kind of condition of post-subjectivity."[17]

In some of my previous works I have explored the use of both the projected light and the natural sunlight in a way that it engages with the specific space that it is in and the current weather condition that surrounds it. Artist George Baker sees a divide in contemporary projection, between the phenomenological and the virtual. In "*Kairoslab*", the time and space that the work is in is considered: The piece is situation in a covered space that is completely open to the exterior space on the north side, along with an open "window" facing the west. Projected onto a sculpted slab of plaster is a still image of a slab of red jasper inlaid with iron magnetite revealing a record of early earth time. The changing daylight, moving clouds, wind and the surrounding trees all play a part in allowing or prohibiting the viewer to see the projected image. This is a continuation of my phenomenological interest in film and video as materials in space and time.

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[16] Turvey, Malcolm, et al. "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art" *October* Vol. 104 (Spring, 2003): 71-96. JSTOR. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

[17] *Ibid.*

"Kairoslab," 2016

When the projected image falls through or on a surface, it evokes multiple interpretations that oscillate between poles through phenomenological experiences. This indeterminacy allows the observer to be aware of the active and subjective nature of seeing, especially when they are implicated in and become part of the projection. I use the projector/projection to simultaneously provide mediation and obstruction for the phenomenological experience of the viewer. The projection provides just enough information for the viewer to decipher the image and come to a conclusion about what it is that she is perceiving, but at the same time it allows for abstraction and alteration through obscuring with the viewer's own shadow, and the overlapping and discrepancy between the two simultaneously projected images from the two projectors.

In comparing the mirror to the video image on a monitor, artist Dan Graham remarks that a mirror, intended to be seen from a frontal position, optically responds to the viewer's movements and subjective time-space axis. Place (time and space) becomes "illusorily eternal" as the image in the mirror is "perceived as a static instant."[18] The ambiguously contoured video image that is lost to a "translucent depth," on the other hand, does not change in perspective as the viewer moves around in space. It gives us a world that is "in temporal flux and connected subjectively (because it can be identified with) to experienced duration."[19] In my piece, the position of the video projectors in relationship to the viewer and the projection screen facilitates a situation in which the projector-screen structure becomes simultaneously a mirror and a video monitor screen. As would in a mirror, the viewer encounters her own shadow frontally, with the shadow increasing or decreasing in size as she moves closer or further away from the projectors. The perspective of the projected image of the grass, however, does not shift as the viewer walks around. Therefore, when a viewer stands between the projectors and the "screen," she becomes trapped inside both a mirror and a video screen, that is, depending on which side of the screen one is viewing this from. From the exterior of the structure, the shadow of the viewer on the interior side becomes a part of the image that the viewer on the exterior sees on the video "screen" as, along with the other objects within the interior space, only the shadow of, not the actual form casting the shadow, is seen. "Mirrors in enclosures exteriorize all objects within the interior space," observes Graham.[20] The wall-screen in my piece effectively becomes a two-way-shadow-mirror-video screen.

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[18] Graham, Dan, Alexander Alberro, and Jeff Wall. *Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999. Print. Page 52-61.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

Calling video a "present-time medium," Graham explains how video images can become "simultaneous with its perception by/of its audience (it can be the image of its audience perceiving). The space/time it represents is continuous, unbroken, and congruent with that of the real time which is the shared time of its perceivers and their individual and collective real environments." Graham describes this as using "indigenous data in the immediate, present-time environment or connects parallel time/space continua."[21] It involves the viewer by making her not just a viewer but also the viewed. This suggests a live-video-situation in where the viewer has more influence on the projected image they are seeing, which I am interested in exploring moving forward.

"Constructure," 2017

21 *Ibid.*

Surrogates

"Constructure," 2017

Philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard traces the development of simulation in the "orders of simulacra" throughout human civilization. Whereas in the first order an image is a basic reflection of reality, or an illusion and stand-in for the real, perversion of reality amidst the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century—as in Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*—saw copies and counterfeits proliferate, resulting in signs that were arbitrary and artificial and where reality is absent; representation became as real as the thing it represents as the boundary between reality and representation blur. In postmodernity, the third order simulacra "bears no relation to any reality whatsoever," and a reversal occurs where the representation precedes the real, and produces it, creating "Hyperreality" and becoming its own truth.[22]

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[22] Baudrillard, Jean, and Mark Poster. *Selected Writings*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001. Print.

Baudrillard maintains that this has become our main way of experiencing and understanding the world. In our postmodern society, we have become so dependent on maps and models that we have lost connection with the real world that comes before the map. "The territory no longer precedes the map," Baudrillard explains, "nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory."[23] Baudrillard goes on to say that it is no longer about "a question of imitation, or duplication, or even parody," but is instead about "a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real."[24] Some kind of reality is still needed for us to recognize the artificial and the artifice. We, however, have lost the ability to make the distinction between nature and artifice.

Baudrillard uses a few examples of phenomena to illustrate this loss of distinctions between "reality" and the simulacrum: media culture (e.g. television, film, the internet, billboards); language and ideology (in the postmodern belief that recognizes ideology as the foundation of our perception of reality. When we are so reliant on language to construct our perceptions, any representation of reality is already ideological, always already constructed by simulacra.); urbanization, which causes us to lose touch with the natural world as we continue to develop and build on existing land. Natural spaces (that we have labeled "protected forests" or "parks") are now defined in contradistinction to the urban, the "reality" for the urbanized human. We now expect to be informed by signs of nature to precede access to nature.

These phenomena keep us from accessing "reality". The pixel precedes the image.

In my piece, the pixel is not negated but magnified and utilized as what they are. A pixel is a sample of the original image, and the smallest addressable and controllable element that constitutes the image we see on the screen. Projected onto the "screens" is an image of grass, or, intentionally made prominent through the compression of video and the physical texture of the walls, the pixel grid-map is overlaid on top of the three-dimensional objects in the space. The pixels become more "real" than the grass, as well as the surface of the plaster towel it falls on. The layers in the piece becomes like a tiered framework of representation.

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[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*

Plato believes that our physical reality is inadequate, and of a lower-world, mutable and unstable copies of what he calls the Forms (the ideal, the good, the non-physical but substantial and most-real idea). According to him, the idea, the Form of the object precedes its construction and is not the production of the maker. Form is idea, and object is a representation of the Form. Form is what we intellectually identify and use as a standard for classifying the multitude of objects presented to our sense perception. Our mind recognizes the Form, not our eyes. Plato believes that accepting examples in place of real definitions is no better than regarding shadows as real objects. As a representor, he says, the poet "deals with things which are, in fact, two generations away from reality."[25]

Plato also brings up the question of the reflection in the mirror. We are only "creating images, not actual real things" when we hold a mirror up to an object.[26] It is only an image, a representation. The representor merely provides the illusion of fulfilment, without actually understanding either the needs or the object itself. The objects in the piece become images, representations of the real things. They are not functional as the objects that they depict.

The visual world that we perceive with our eyes is constantly changing and shifting, full of deception and contradictions. The Forms, on the other hand, are unchanging and perfect models according to Plato. It is a simple unity and not complex like the visual objects. Therefor it is not possible to misunderstand the Form. Perhaps the different objects in the space have a common "goodness" that unifies them in From more than their visual complexity. In my piece, non-physical the shadow of objects such as the plaster hammer, towel, and staple gun seen from the exterior give the most real idea or Form, and the actual concrete object cast from plaster exist as mere representations of that idea. Plato's cave also comes to mind as the viewer sees the movement of other spectators moving about inside the structure, also kind of a cave-like thing.

For Plato, seeing is literally believing; to be able to see and identify something one must first have the knowledge of it in his mind. *The Allegory of the Cave* shows that what prevents us from accessing knowledge is our stubborn belief that what we see with our eyes is reality, and that

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[25] Van den Braembussche, Antoon. Thinking Art: An Introduction to Philosophy of Art. Brussels: Springer Science & Business Media, 2009. Print. Page 18.

[26] Plato. *Republic*, Book X. Perseus. Web. 21 May 2017.

knowledge is secured by using our senses to interact with this universe of changing, complex objects. The poets and artists are performers and puppeteers, indoctrinating the prisoners using images. Plato concludes that the audience that believes these images constitute truth is deluded by their imagination.

"Constructure," 2017

Space/ Body/ Mind/ Control

Filmmaker Anthony McCall expresses how he is struck by the motionlessness of gallery visitors in installations with film or video projections. These pieces then cease to be installations in the sense of being about the sculptural space. He remarks that the moving images always trumps the sculptural, and that the experiences of viewing a sculpture versus viewing moving images are "diametrically opposed."[27] "However placed in a space," he says, the viewer "[enters] the elsewhere of the moving image," leaving his physical body behind, which "remains rooted on the spot."[28] Conversely, to experience sculpture or architectural space, one must move one's body around. Chrissie Iles argues that today, there is a nostalgia for the architecture of cinema that is making projected work today become heightened and "exaggeratedly immersive." Viewers are mesmerized and transfixed by the image that they become "passive and motionless."[29]

The structure considers the space where it is situated, with the open side of it facing the corner, where it is not immediately noticeable. The viewer is made to walk around to the "back" to be able to see the frontal view of the projection.

Artist Matthew Buckingham expresses that for him, "the primary reason for working with the projected image is that it always implies some kind of social space."[30] This is not only because cinema has a history of being a social activity. He explains in projection pieces, physical space is required to project an image, and a space exists between the apparatus and the projection surface to accommodate the viewer. In his work, he goes beyond the conventional space between the projector and the screen, and explores ways to open the viewing experience "to a different social dimension."[31] Buckingham has manipulated and particularized the space to

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[27] Turvey, Malcolm, et al. "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art" *October* Vol. 104 (Spring, 2003): 71-96. JSTOR. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*

complicated the viewing process, and to make the viewer aware of not only herself in relation to the piece but also in relation to other viewers. Viewers and artists can both consciously and unconsciously create social spaces, buffer zones, or boundaries between the viewing and the viewed.

Matthew Buckingham, "*Caterina van Hemessen is Twenty Years Old,*" 2009

Chrissie Iles defines a projected piece an "installation" as soon as the projected image touches the floor, since that is "negating cinema on a certain level."[32] This simple but critical part of the piece, she believes, prompts viewers to walk around in a gallery or museum setting, instead of sitting in front of the projection and watching it "all the way through like a narrative film." Other cues such as the colour that the space is painted with (white or black) will also refer to a gallery setting or an immersive cinematic one. George Baker commented on the interesting point that as mechanical reproducible things, the projected image in contemporary art "smuggles in authorial control over the final project in a way that's almost ironclad."[33] He suggests that, even as a technologically reproducible medium, the projected image in contemporary art is often individualized in a way that makes it an unreproducible, singularized experience that is only accessible in the format of installation.

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*

In trying to balance authorial control versus viewer interpretation, I have installed the piece with sculptural objects in a way that seems controlled and specific. Plaster casts of objects related to comfort, care, and maintenance are placed and hung in seemingly deliberate ways throughout the interior space. Once the viewer starts to make connections and speculations based on the juxtaposition of objects, however, she may find only fragments of information that do not grant her full access to the author's knowledge. With the nature of the gallery setting, is the viewer also able to experience the "entire" piece in a durational sense, where they are free to walk in and out. The viewer is also able to watch the piece multiple times as it loops, beginning from different points on the timeline. Anthony McCall calls the viewer of such contemporary works the "indeterminate spectator" (where they are not confined to a chair in the movie theatre but are free to move about, when they please), with the pieces also able to provide access to more people (as opposed to scheduled film screenings). The viewer, then, may be the one that has an invisible but powerful influence over what the piece becomes. This becomes "...a fundamental shift, the recognition and stimulation of the active or projective nature of perception and cognition, and oblige us to address (with caution) the question of interactive and casual relations between the various areas and phenomena involved."[34]

"Constructure," 2017

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[34] *Ibid.*

George Baker remarks how conditioned contemporary viewers would automatically make "cinematic arrangements" for themselves before the moving image.[35] Since the contemporary gallery space and the traditional cinema space prompt and accommodates different kinds of physical interactions, placing a projected installation piece in the gallery will need to provide cues other than the traditional cinematic ones (such as a place to sit, a darkened room, and the structured and conventional positions of projector and screen) to encourage the viewer to interact with the piece more as a sculptural object in space. In Dan Graham's book *Two Way Mirror-Power*, he talks about the architectural code, which reflects and directs the social order. He also mentions a video code, where wall-sized monitors and projections "connect and mediate between rooms, families, social classes, 'public/private' domains, connecting architecturally (and socially) bounded regions, they take on an architectural (and social) function."[36] He argues that therefore videos in architectural space will function as both windows and mirrors, but will "subvert the effects and functions of both."[37] Windows, he explains, "mediate separated spatial units and frame a conventional perspective of one unit's relation to the other," whereas mirrors "define, self-reflectively, spatial enclosure and ego enclosure."[38] The architectural code therefor defines certain cultural and psychological boundaries, and Graham seems certain that videos will be the successor to replace some of these boundaries. Notions of the "public" and the "private" also come up in the age of both voluntary and involuntary surveillance (authoritative establishments and social media). Graham notes that the interior "defines or is defined by the publicly accepted notion of privacy."[39] In my piece, there seems to be an "interior" and an "exterior," but with the exclusion of the fourth wall and the visibility of the interior shadows, the kind of architectural and video division that sanctions certain kinds of moral codes and social behavior can become perplexing. This is further complicated by the idea of surveillance in our contemporary society, where the urge to hold up one's smart phone to take a selfie or of other viewers inside of a video art installation is hard to fight for many.

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Graham, Dan, Alexander Alberro, and Jeff Wall. *Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999. Print. Page 52-61.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

Dan Graham, "*Crazy Spheroid-Two Entrances*," 2009

Psychologist Carl Jung used the concept of archetype in his theory of the human psyche. He believed that universal and mythic characters—archetypes—reside within the collective conscious of the people all over the world. The term "archetype" has its roots in ancient Greek, with *archein* meaning "original or old"; and *typos* meaning "pattern, model or type". Together, the term means "original pattern" of which all other similar persons, objects, or concepts are derived, copied, modeled, or emulated. Archetypes represent fundamental human motifs of our experience as we evolved; they evoke deep emotions. Twelve primary archetypes were described by Jung as symbols of human motivations.

"The onlookers make the picture."

Marcel Duchamp[40]

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[40] Judovitz, Dalia. *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Page 149.

Critic Annette Michelson and American avant-garde cinema historian P. Adams Sitney argue that in the American avant-garde film tradition, film is used as a metaphor for the mind. Malcolm Turvey, editor of *October* also sees in contemporary projected images this use of the medium to represent psychological processes, and to make the viewer "re-experience certain types of psychological states."[41]
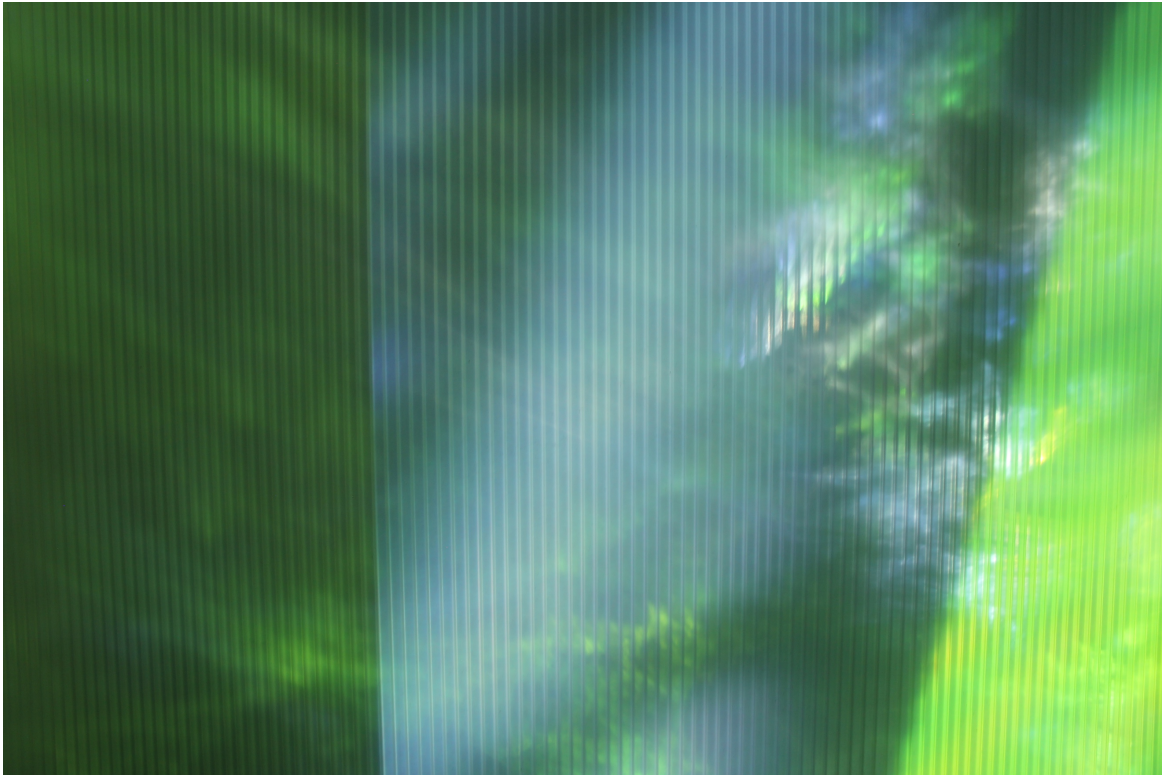
"Constructure," 2017

Art historian and scholar Dario Gamboni says that the "'potential images' with which it will be concerned are those that depend on 'the onlooker's state of mind' and come fully into being, in conformity with the artist's intentions, only through the participation of the onlooker."[42] Through the viewer's act of perception and participation, the work has embedded in it multiple potential meanings that may or may not come to light depending on the viewer's state of mind

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[41] Turvey, Malcolm, et al. "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art" *October* Vol. 104 (Spring, 2003): 71-96. JSTOR. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

[42] Gamboni, Dario. *Potential Images: Ambiguity and Indeterminacy in Modern Art*. London: Reaktion, 2004. Print. Page 9-11.

or physical condition. The structure could become a green house, a stage set, a therapeutic health spa, or a shelter depending on the beholder.

"Constructure," 2017

In the Age of Information Propagation

It is our lack of control and fear of technology that makes it sublime. According to Kant, the sublime induces both pleasure and fear; it engenders a "negative lust" in which both the

concepts of power and violence create an indeterminate condition.[43] Being at a safe distance characterizes the experience of the sublime. With technology so densely structured into our modern environment, today one is naturally born into and tethered to technology like an umbilical cord, unable to prosper when disconnected from the digital system that we have constructed.

Dutch scholar Jos de Mul also observes that: "Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the main site for the ambiguous experience of the sublime has gradually shifted from nature to technology."[44] He goes on to explain that, "in our (post)modern world it is no longer the superior force of technology. However, with the transfer of power from divine nature to human technology, the ambiguous experience of the sublime also nests in the latter."[45]

David Nye, author of *American Technological Sublime*, describes the sublime as "an essentially religious feeling, aroused by the confrontation with impressive objects."[46] The sublime landscape of the Romantic period has now been replaced today by immersive video and light installations such as those by James Turrell or Japanese collective TeamLab, inspiring awe, wonder, and the unknown. Nye posits that during the twentieth century, the enthusiasm for the technological sublime has turned into fear, as we increasingly discover the double-edged sword of the potentially destructive and uncontrollable power of technology. Still, there is a seductiveness in the technological sublime, as the modern woman finds herself constantly distracted by its fruits. Dependency on the mediation and surrogate of technology, such as the digital image has become an epidemic in our contemporary society. Alas, as technology is largely comforting to us, we consume it at a distance, "hidden" behind the screen, something that conceals and protects. Perhaps in an attempt to quell or control the force of technology, or just to make moving image work sustainable for the artist and the gallery, editions of moving image pieces are created. This making scarce the moving image is almost denying its nature as technically infinitely reproducible.

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[43] Krimmer, Elisabeth. *The Representation of War in German Literature: From 1800 to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Page 4.

[44] De Mul, Jos. "The Technological Sublime." *Next Nature Network*. N.p., 10 Sept. 2015. Web. 7 Mar. 2017.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Nye, David E.. *American Technological Sublime*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994. Xiii.

TeamLab, "*Water Through the Crystal Universe*," 2016

The structure in my installation becomes like our body, permeated with the seductive hue and hum of technology emanating from the projectors, fan, lights, and humidifier. It is like a living entity, with its own parts and functioning processes. We have become so conditioned to this noise that we don't notice it unless we pay close attention.

Walter Benjamin observes that because the equipment has "penetrated so deeply into reality" that made the equipment-free aspect of reality "the height of artifice," with the sight of immediate reality becoming "the blue flower in the land of technology."[47] Hal Foster confesses that he is disturbed by how some projected images have the same dematerialization effect as media culture at large, to which we've been conditioned. To illustrate his point, he references one of Bill Viola's pieces, which according to Foster provides an "experience of spiritual immediacy effected through intense media immersion." [48] He labels this a "bewitching mysticism," the "blue flower" of the projected image. Novalis' blue flower of hallucination from romantic poetry has now in effect been replaced by the projected image. The projected image in my piece touches the floor; it is part of an installation and is immersive. It does not, however, possess the same kind of polished quality and "bewitching mysticism," as the viewer is not

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[47] Hansen, Miriam. "Benjamin, Cinema, and Experience: "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology"." *Walter Benjamin: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*. Ed. Peter Osborne. London: Routledge, 2005. Print. Page 268

[48] Turvey, Malcolm, et al. "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art" *October* Vol. 104 (Spring, 2003): 71-96. JSTOR. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

removed from the perceived environment of the gallery space (and placed in a darkened room devoid of other distractions). The technology that generates the projected image and accompanied phenomena (wind and mist) are generated by machines, but at the same time very real. The fan, placed right above where the threshold of the fourth wall would have been, creates an invisible, but palpable, physically perceptible fourth wall, suggesting a threshold, or a portal, into a different space, but at the same time not cutting off or barricading the projected environment from the rest of the world.

"Constructure," 2017

Indeterminacy

Indeterminacy is the character of something not exactly known, defined, fixed, or outlined. The word's origins come from early 17th century, and means in late Latin *indeterminatus*, *in-* "not" and *determinatus-*"limited, determined." Something indeterminate has no boundaries on its identity, and lacks identifying limits.[49]

The indeterminacy of boundaries has shown up in my previous work, such as in the swaying "phantom" of the helium-filled balloon in *"Bbbl"*. In this piece, the boundaries of interior and exterior space is not clearly defined, and the "assumed" frontal position from which the viewers are "supposed" to see the piece changes determine on who is perceiving it, and where they are in position to the piece. Viewed from the "back" of the structure that is closest to the corner, what would seem like the view that is usually hidden or "screened off" from the viewer become Mise-en-scène, a "placing on stage", intended part of the piece telling a "visual story" through cinematic and stage design, and poetic styling. In film criticism, mise-en-scène has been referred to as the "grand undefined term."[50]

"Bbbl," 2016

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[49] "Indeterminate." Merriam-Webster.com. *Merriam-Webster Dictionaries*, 2017. Web. 14 May 2017.

[50] Brian Henderson, "The Long Take," in *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*, ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. Page 315.

Neon, the gaseous chemical element of atomic number 10 on the periodic table, is obtained by the distillation of liquid air, and is most often used in fluorescent lights and neon signs. Being the neuter word (grammatically, the class of words that refer to things that are neither masculine nor feminine) of the adjective *neos*, neon literally means "something new" in Greek. Neuter, when applying to a person, means asexual, or having no apparent sexual characteristics. It takes no side. It is neither (as it means in Latin). It is indeterminate. We cannot differentiate ourselves from other, or the outside from the inside.

In proximity to the "green house," a neon sign with three "z"s signal to those on the exterior the state of the interior space, whether it is "open" or "closed," in motion or in stasis; it is used to communicate the granting or denying of access. The flashing neon sign on the wall is placed in proximity to the structure, and seems to indicate an invitation to enter. The viewer, however, is perplexed as the three "z's" flash at a slow and steady pace of the resting heartbeat. To disturb or not to disturb? The clear blue neon light resembles the blue light emitting from electronic devices such as laptops, smart phones, or electronic tablets that affect our body's circadian rhythm. Simultaneously tapping into our brain with a hypnotic rhythm, the blue light hinders the production of our melatonin production. With each flash, each pulse, the viewer's eye is simultaneously bathing in a visual lullaby and receiving the Pavlovian signals of the flashing blue light that we have been so conditioned to in the age of blue light and screens. Perhaps this feels just as normal as computer screensavers of natural scenery.

"Constructure," 2017

Constructure

The dictionary defines "structure" as the arrangement of and relations between the parts or elements of something complex. "*Con-*," is a prefix meaning "with; jointly; together", and when used as a verb, "to con" means to persuade (someone) to do or believe something, typically by use of a trick or deception. Con also comes from "confidence man," someone who defrauds a person after first gaining their trust and persuading them to feel certain about the truth of something that is not actually true.

This constructed structure—*Constructure*, is a deliberately arranged ecosystem with fluctuating variables providing cues and information that, when received and perceived by different individuals, may have varying and shifting meanings and interpretations. The identity and purpose of this constructure is indeterminate, and its character dependent on the many variables in time and space at any given moment. Perhaps it is not the artist that is doing the "conning," but the viewers themselves and their own set of subjectivity, memory, and knowledge of the world.

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St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* lib xi, cap xiv, sec 17 (ca. 400 CE)

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