

Wandering through practices and archaeologies of space, place and image

INTERSECTING TRAVELOGUES

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INTRODUCTION

“We are not moving through an epoch of certitudes: Cosmonauts in a swarm, we navigate in the provisional, we must reconsider each thought at every instant.”

Iannis Xenakis¹

¹ As quoted by Hewett 2010, 26

A practice rooted in an experimentation with the technologies and presentation techniques of the moving image² in (architectural) space³ has resulted in the production of video and sound installations that both represented and were inserted within urban architecture. Making these installations has led to a reconsideration of the relationship between the individual and the built space which he or she navigates and negotiates. Beyond its aesthetic and physical characteristics, this space resonates with historical, cultural and social references, with collective and individual memories.

This practice engages seemingly insignificant details of the urban landscape: abandoned or underused buildings, older model cars, deserted streets, the resonant markers of place, of changing and forgotten societies, art and culture where indices of space become signifiers for disappearing, often culturally dysfunctional, places. It is a practice rooted in wandering, in walking through cities and into buildings of shifting historical significance and in travelling to sites that simultaneously resonate familiarity and strangeness. Wandering is also a mental activity, involving reflections upon uncertain objects of enquiry through a variety of different disciplines, wandering the way Xenakis's cosmonauts do, who "navigate in the provisional," where "each thought" is reconsidered "at every instant."

Without making claims for an interdisciplinary approach, this wandering traverses disciplines. In order to describe its intellectual and spatial dynamics, the practice needs to be considered from a variety of viewpoints. The expertise is one of a practising artist, the interests are those of a wandering individual. The practice is not rooted in one specific discipline, but is informed by a set of established disciplines.

2 I use the term "moving image" to refer to practices and technologies of film, video and digital moving image presentation. With the shifts in technology and the subsequent multiplicity of delivery methods of the moving image, from portable devices to architectural projections, the term "cinema" has become almost synonymous with the way I am using the term "moving image." The American artist Renée Green has adopted "cinema" as an all embracing term for contemporary moving image practices. "Today, cinema is an umbrella term for a variety of moving images and time-based forms, which have intersecting, yet particular, histories of emergence." (Green 2012)

3 Many of the spaces designed for moving image presentation often manifested a collective desire to reconsider and reconstruct the accepted cinematic models of movie presentation and viewing. These former spaces of moving image presentation lend themselves to an investigation informed by concepts of media archaeology.

Concepts and objects of enquiry emanating from art history, film studies, media studies, sociology, human geography and cultural studies are all drawn upon in order to shed light on these perambulatory activities. Writing emanating from this practice could be said, to quote Mick Wilson referring to recent tendencies in artistic research, to “contain an inherent impulse to work across disciplines simply by virtue of the questions produced within the enquiry.” (Wilson 2012, 23)

This wandering has led to engaging, more specifically, with aspects of architectural history and concepts of a media archaeology. This engagement is not undertaken with the intention to take notions out of context, but in order to be aware of the fields and approaches these paradigms address. The histories of these fields have not been elaborated on, because this was not the objective of this investigation. The references to these disciplines should be placed in the context of a practice of wandering and its relationship to the products of that wandering. It is with the understanding that an artist engaged in research is, as Mick Wilson puts it, “a ‘guest’ in another’s ‘place’” (Wilson 2012, 28). The methods employed are therefore not intended to validate and defend findings within the visited fields. Rather, borrowing findings and concepts from these fields clarifies aspects of this mode of inquiry. This borrowing is not, as Wilson would put it, the behaviour of a “guest giving up the right of critique,” but of one who is “merely suspending the moment of critique until,” through investigations and experiments, he or she has “engaged in learning the local ways.” (Wilson 2012, 28)

The delayed “moment of critique” occurs within the practice, and possibly in the reception of the artwork, where the object of enquiry is re-contextualised into an affective experience. Thus, what is exposed here, in these pages, is not only a wandering enquiry but also a wondering aesthetic, based on a wandering eye and mind that ultimately leads to the production of artworks. The findings of the enquiry are not used to directly inform the disciplines from where the enquiry emanated; the return is generated through another form of knowledge, a knowledge communicated through the practice of the artist and the ensuing public manifestations of this practice.

This text looks to the concept of media archaeology, itself a practice that explores the apparatuses and manifestations of media as a historical continuum, not as activities rooted in discrete technological

specificities. From the perspective of a moving image artist, the specificities of “video art” as opposed to those of “experimental film” are tiresome limitations constraining an open exploration of the potential of working with the moving image and its histories. With a media archaeology concept, the processes do not reside in particular media declinations (film, video, new media, etc.) but rather within practices, including their glitches and side-effects, that have been in a long process of evolution and revolution.⁴

In writing this text, wandering in terms of a spatial practice is informed by the social critiques of Lefebvre and de Certeau,⁵ and is inextricably linked to much media art activity. When one writes about space and when one considers the histories of the spaces one practices in, one also enters into a discussion framed by theories and histories of architecture. In the case of this project, the ideology and promises that modern architecture espouses direct the discussion. While the text following acknowledges and reflects upon these ideas in reference to historical figures within the discipline of architecture, to Le Corbusier, to Iannis Xenakis, to Buckminster Fuller, to Peter and Alison Smithson, to Fritz Haller and to Clorindo Testa, the original contributions made to this architecturally framed discussion are refracted through an art practice that is made manifest in (mostly modern) specialised public architectural spaces, in contemporary art galleries, museums, libraries and cinemas in their various forms.

An awareness of space is acted on intuitively and corporeally in the recording of the images and sounds that are used in the productions coming from this art practice. This spatial sensibility is further performed in the arrangement and installation of these audio-visual

4 Eric Kluitenberg asks that media archaeology “be read as an alternative to the dominant writing of media history, whose implicit construction of a unitary narrative of progress – the idea that the course of technological development over time in and of itself equals progress.” For Kluitenberg, media archaeology explores “the significance of failed projects, the shards of media history,” and includes in its investigations “the role of the phantasmatic in media culture.” (Kluitenberg 2011, 51)

5 Henri Lefebvre sees spaces as “productions” of an order based on political and technical requirements: “They are products of an activity which involves the economic and technical realms but which extends well beyond them, for these are also political products, and strategic spaces.” (Lefebvre 1992, 84) Michel de Certeau claims that by walking the individual can renegotiate and circumvent the powers that structure the city. “Walking is empowering as it is almost always our first real use of space.” (de Certeau 1984, 84)

elements within the architecture of the exhibition. As an intuitive sensibility, it is not discussed in these texts, but rather embedded in the works and experienced in their public presentation. As an artist, one shares one's reflections and obsessions through the production and exhibition of works that manifest a research process. There are times when an artist needs to communicate another way, sometimes through text, to articulate thoughts about the process and the subjects reflected upon. It is through writing (in parallel with a visual practice) that an artist diversifies and multiplies possible methods of communication and, hopefully, renders more complete and more complex the subjects of the enquiry and practice.

Art is first and foremost a thinking process that takes place in a visual and experiential field. The texts that make up this project expose this process and its declinations, from the initial trigger, the flash of recognition, that leads to taking on the production of art to the many connections made when trying to work through and around an idea. It is an uncertain process that is best captured by the idea of "wandering" across boundaries, disciplines, places and histories because it also involves a tentative and contemplative process of self-reflection, but also because it looks at the reflections of others. Reflections intersect and intermingle to create a palimpsest of origins, a multiplicity of references.

This project engages places, ahistorical sites, uncommon architectures, forgotten settings. It is a spatiotemporal wandering through the remnants of experiments and obscure practices, through the debris, abandoned spaces and obsolete monuments left behind. It is fragments of storylines intersecting and colliding. Stories "take place" and places spawn narratives, crystallisations of the plots and rumours that they have become.

The method for the project involves seeking out, or simply coming across, places, places that capture one's attention because they seem at once familiar and strange. In a very basic sense it is a wandering method. It subsequently involves visiting these places in order to experience their spatiotemporal presence and the materiality of their settings and architecture. Once the place has been visited and allowed to be perceived internally an investigation of its historical, social and personal implications is undertaken. The combination of the place's

perceived appearance and its cumulative historical, cultural and personal resonance constitutes this project's narratives.

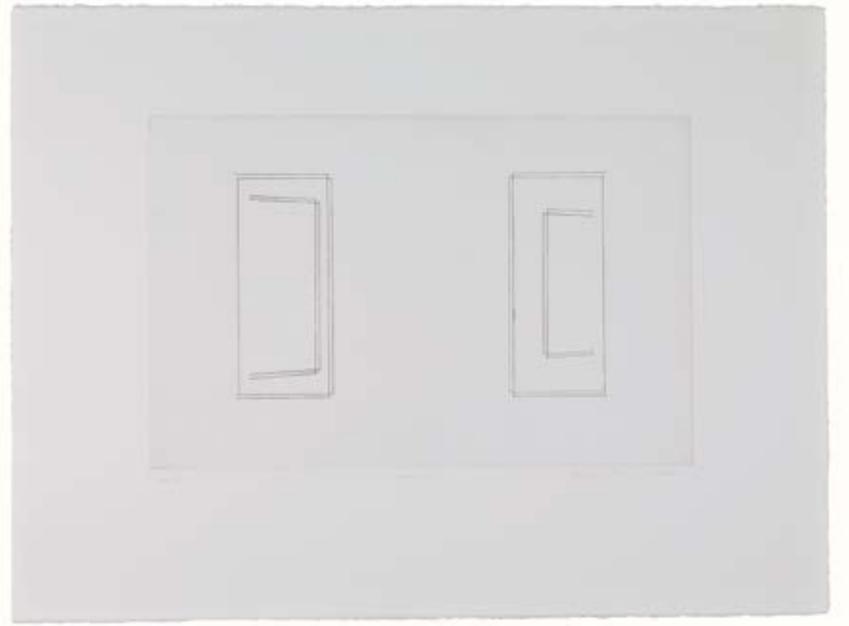
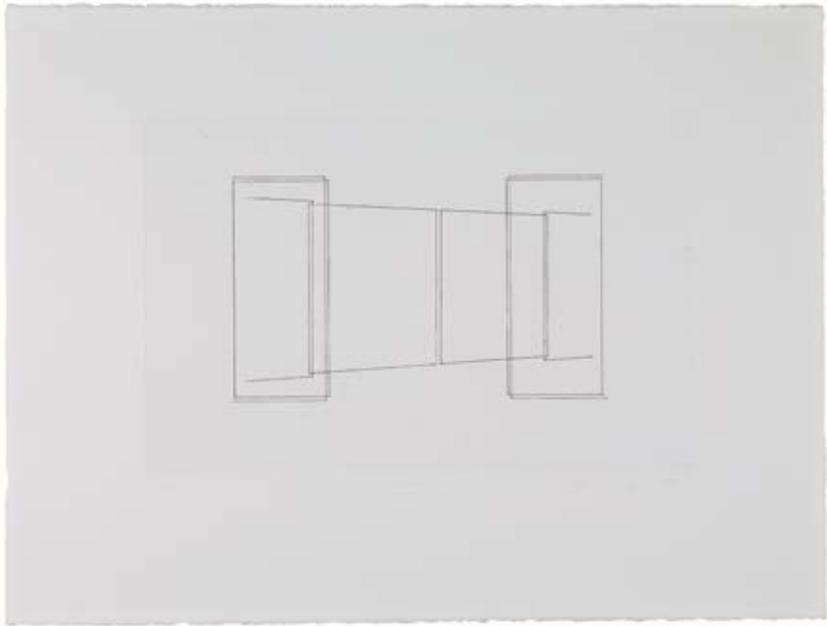
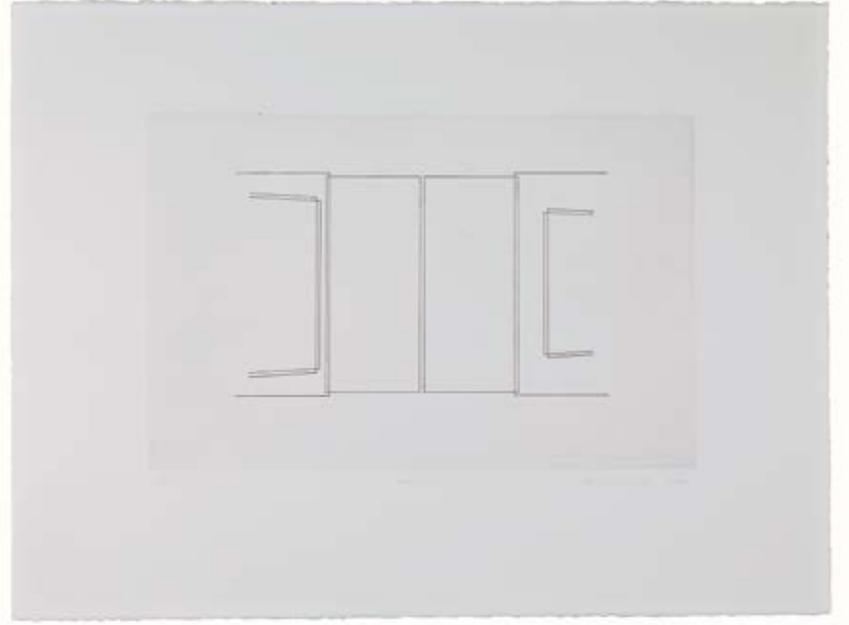
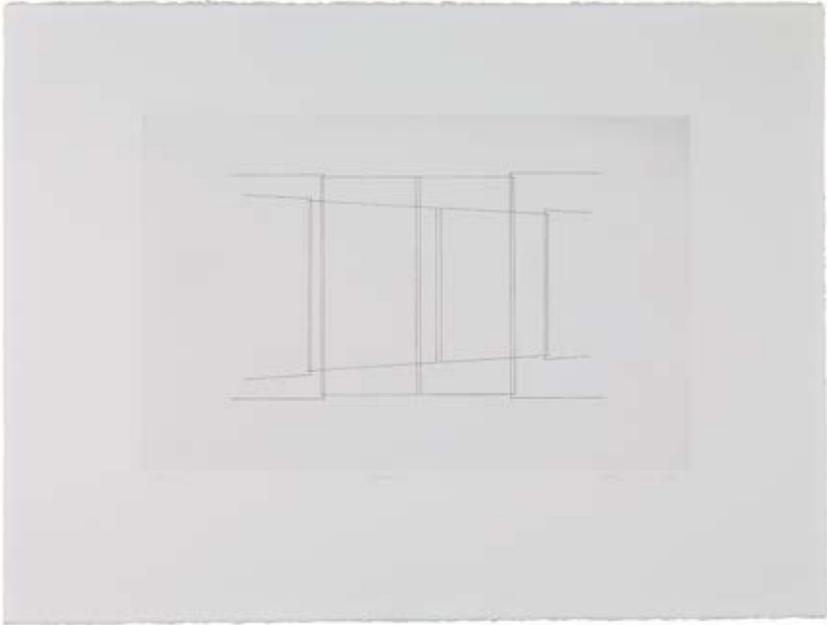
Places are talked and written about. They become stories and stories have characters, the figures that lead us through their landscapes, settings and events. The places in this project are important historical sites of discovery and forgetting and these figures function as reference points for a wandering mode of enquiry. They are haunted by their former occupants and creators: Robert Smithson in Passaic and at Rozel Point, Jorge Luis Borges in the Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina and Iannis Xenakis working on the Philips Pavilion in Brussels. We are also led through these spaces by later generations of practitioners of space, time and forgetting, by the travelogue inflected films and installations of Martin Beck, Tacita Dean and Anri Sala. The references to the aforementioned practitioners and to a selection of their works are proposed not as precedents for, nor as influences on, the practice that is the focus of this project. In the spirit of the approach taken to this work, the artists referred to are presented as "fellow wanderers," practitioners who reflect upon and engage in similar problems as those dealt with in this text, with obsolescence and architecture, with mapping and travel as well as with the moving image and space.

While all of these people have contributed innovative and original works, the aim here is not to provide a formal analysis of their work or provide an in-depth appreciation of their artistic production. A selection of their works serve as case studies for an investigation into wandering as an aesthetic practice, into the spatialisation of the image and into original approaches to media and architectural history. Works by the aforementioned people have become departure points for this project of wandering research. Fragments of specific disciplinary histories including modern architecture, concrete music and media studies are explored. A search for the remains of the Xenakis designed Philips Pavilion in Brussels is one instance of this. Another search was undertaken after visiting an Anri Sala exhibition in Berlin. Seeing a work by Sala that referred to spatial acoustics led to a consideration of the space in which the work was shown subsequently leading to an investigation of modern architectural projects in 1960s Berlin and of a recent urban renewal project in Montreal, during an exhibition of Sala's work there.

The project is structured in six chapters; each is made up of a series of reflections and observations and each functions as a loose travelogue. It is an open work, reconsidering Umberto Eco's sense of the term. As Eco posits, "the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood. These give it a wealth of different resonances and echoes without impairing its original essence" (Eco 1989, 3) Following on from Eco's position, the project is fractured into multiple perspectives which are grouped into different approaches, structured as a collection of wanderings. Interspersed among these wanderings are images of another manifestation of a wandering practice, documentation of artworks and installations that resulted from and informed the research discussed in the text.









Chapter one
WANDERING METHODS:
SITES AND ITINERARIES

A tour

In September 1967, the American artist, Robert Smithson took a bus from Manhattan, where he lived, to his hometown of Passaic, New Jersey about 20 kilometres away. His intention was to look at and document the deteriorating architecture of the industrial landscape and along the Passaic River. Seeing a particularly interesting structure along the route, a bridge over the river, Smithson disembarked from the bus to approach it. The artist carried a consumer snapshot camera with him, a Kodak Instamatic with a cartridge of black and white film. He continued his journey on foot and took six shots with the camera, different views of the industrial structures along the river.⁶ Smithson also wrote about what he saw. The photographs and the text were used in a four-page artist's project, *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic*, for the December 1967 edition of *Artforum*.

This seminal project serves as a posthumous key to understanding Robert Smithson's approach to his sculptures, installations and earthworks; *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* synthesised the artist's interest in the entropic mineral composition and deterioration of the post-industrial landscape. It is a matter for art historians whether the published work constituted a photo essay, the documentation of a performance or an illustrated text. *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* nevertheless presents an important moment in art history when both walking and writing were reinforced as valid forms of research and expression for a contemporary artist.⁷

Smithson's written account of his journey by foot and of the day's finds reads like a *carnet de route* or a travelogue with his reflections on science fiction, sculpture, landscape and the environment.⁸ His

⁶ The details of Robert Smithson's *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* are explained in Robert Hobbs's book from 1981, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*. (Hobbs 1981, 88-90)

⁷ A recent translation of Smithson's wanderings and mappings in artistic research could be found in the photographic project of Roger Palmer in which Palmer drives from Passaic to Rozel Point (the site of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* earthwork) in a spiral route, photographing roadside phenomena along the way. The 47 photographs are displayed in the book *Roger Palmer: Jetty* published in 2015.

⁸ A *carnet de route*, or "travel diary" is a form of journalistic essay writing that recounts the daily occurrences in a traveller's journey. A "travelogue" adds images (lantern slides, photographs and films) to the written account and is often performed, either as a public lecture or as a recorded narration to a film or slideshow. In one of Smithson's later pieces, *Hotel Palenque* (1969) the travelogue form is even more present with the artist providing his text as a voiceover to the 31 projected slides that make up the photo work.

walk is erratic; he is covering at once familiar and unfamiliar ground, a stroll through the uninhabited, not easily accessible periphery of his hometown. As he wanders so do his thoughts and, like the Peripatetics of Ancient Greece who would discuss philosophy while walking around a colonnaded courtyard, Smithson's thinking while walking past industrial monuments leads to a meditation on his surroundings.

The bus passed over the first monument. I pulled the buzzercord and got off at the corner of Union Avenue and River Drive. The monument was a bridge over the Passaic River that connected Bergen County with Passaic County. Noonday sunshine cinema-ized the site, turning the bridge and the river into an over-exposed *picture*. Photographing it with my Instamatic 400 was like photographing a photograph. The sun became a monstrous light-bulb that projected a detached series of "stills" through my Instamatic into my eye. When I walked on the bridge, it was though I was walking on an enormous photograph that was made of wood and steel, and underneath the river existed as an enormous movie film that showed nothing but a continuous blank. (Smithson 1981, 91)

The area covered by Smithson's wandering was one of urban periphery, places normally seen from a passing car. By walking through this landscape, stopping to photograph it and write about it, he slows it down. The worn artefacts and details of the "monuments" expose their state of degradation, their slow entropic transformation into what Smithson called "ruins in reverse". (Smithson 1981, 92)

Influenced by Robert Smithson's *carnet de route*, writing may take the form of a travelogue of slowed down mobile observation, a travelogue moving through the spaces of the city that exist between function and dereliction. Slow motion and long static shots would be the devices if this writing were cinema. Referring to the plastic temporal properties of movies, of running the film backwards in an attempt to reverse the effects of entropy Smithson writes: "... we could prove the reversibility of eternity by showing the film backwards," but acknowledges the persistence of dissolution as even the material of the film

will decompose, "... sooner or later the film itself would crumble or get lost and enter the state of irreversibility." (Smithson 1981, 94) As the monumental spectacle of the city decomposes so does the media we use to record it. "The false immortality of the film gives the viewer an illusion of control over eternity-but "the superstars" are fading." (Smithson 1981, 94)

The Monuments of Passaic is travelogue through archaeological time. Smithson identifies the sites of future ruins, projecting his future earthworks, his geological displacements of the American industrial landscape into its pre-historic hinterland.⁹ This simultaneous looking backwards (at a technological and a personal past) and forwards (to the reversed ruins of a reconfigured post-industrial landscape) in time, this looking to past objects of future potential, still resonates at the time of writing this text as a reflection upon lost architectures of a collective consciousness and the fading of "cinema-ized" experiences.

A tower

With her film works, Tacita Dean has put together an unfinished visual archive of the disappearing landscape of the 20th century; the English artist has made work about defence structures on the Kent coast conceived after the Great War and about the ruin of a 1960s bubble house she came across while filming on the Cayman Islands. In her film *Fernsehturm* (2001), its location, the iconic television tower of Berlin, becomes an archaeological site. The imposing yet elegant structure is an obsolete media apparatus, a transmitter of broadcast radio and television that is no longer relevant in the spectrum of networked communication, but it is also an optical watchtower, an inefficient and clumsy "panopticon"¹⁰ in the era of satellite surveillance.

⁹ I am thinking here of the monumental *Spiral Jetty*, Smithson's 1970 earthwork that used mechanised industrial techniques of earth displacement to alter the barren, geological formation of the Great Salt Lake in Utah.

¹⁰ The development of the panorama as a tourist attraction in late 18th century Europe was concurrent with the development of the panoptic architecture of prison buildings. Both architectures used new technologies of observation and both were rooted in the Napoleonic wars. The panorama displayed immersive battle scenes from that conflict and the panoptic architecture proposed by Jeremy Bentham for prison surveillance employed architectural technology developed in the construction of 18th century military

Berlin's television tower is visible from the street, even in the outlying sectors of the German capital. Located on the Panoramastraße between the City Hall and Alexanderplatz in the old centre, the omnipresence of the 368-metre-tall structure, its recurrent visibility at the end of every street, reminds Berlin's residents and visitors of where they are and helps them orient themselves in and around the city. As its address suggests, the television tower's viewing platform and revolving restaurant offer, on clear days, panoramic outlooks of the city. Like with many communication towers accessible to the public, its observation deck is circular, allowing the visitor a 360-degree view of the cityscape below. The tower had, as its primary function, the transmission of images and sounds to receivers in its vicinity, but like any radio transmitter it could also function as a receiver, as an apparatus to capture images and sounds. As the tower can be seen from anywhere in Berlin, it also has the symbolic, albeit improbable, potential to be used as a means of surveying Berlin; its panoramic qualities thus being reversed to those of a panopticon.¹¹

The name of Tacita Dean's film *Fernsehturm*¹² is also the German name for the television tower. The 44-minute film shows an afternoon's activities inside the structure's panoramic revolving restaurant. The pacing of the film follows the slow rotation of the restaurant. Typical of the artist's work, *Fernsehturm* is non-narrative, and takes place in real time. The unfolding of the day, the preparation of the tables, the arrival

fortresses. "The building is circular. The apartments of the prisoners occupy the circumference. You may call them, if you please, the *cells*. These *cells* are divided from one another, and the prisoners by that means secluded from all communication with each other, by *partitions* in the form of *radii* issuing from the circumference towards the centre, and extending as many feet as shall be thought necessary to form the largest dimension of the cell. The apartment of the inspector occupies the centre; you may call it if you please the inspector's lodge." (Bentham 1843, 40) In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, first published in 1977, Michel Foucault posits the effect of the panopticon as, "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." (Foucault 1977, 201)

11 Tacita Dean writes and exhibits texts to accompany her film projects. For her work about the television tower, she recounts that the restaurant where she filmed was a favourite spot for Stasi officers, the secret police, to meet in the days of the German Democratic Republic, insinuating that somehow its situation high above the city allowed for the officers to look down and spy upon its residents.

12 In English "television tower," but a literal, syllable for syllable translation would be "far-see-tower."

of patrons being seated and served are observed without comment. While the focus is on these activities, the light from outside marks the passage from morning until dusk and helps provide the uncanny atmosphere of the film.

Television towers are becoming obsolete in an age of internet streaming and satellite communications. *Fernsehturm* displays, in fading colours, the television tower as a redundant panoramic apparatus and as a defunct panopticon. In another nod to media history, Dean shot and edited *Fernsehturm* in 16 mm film. Use of colour film to capture the changing light and ambiance of the restaurant somehow holds it back in time, preserving its notoriety and its prestige in faded tones from another time.¹³ Dean uses an obsolete media to reflect upon an obsolete structure. In an essay entitled "Obsolescence," she writes: "I court anachronism – things that were once futuristic but are now out of date – and I wonder if the objects and buildings I seek were ever, in fact, content in their own time, as if obsolescence was invited at their conception." (Dean 2011, 58)

Dean's fascination for the anachronistic characteristics of obsolete media links her work genealogically to Smithson's and to his tour of the crumbling industrial monuments of Passaic. Tacita Dean has made work that directly references Smithson, including *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* (1997) and *From Columbus, Ohio to the Partially Buried Woodshed* (1999), and her production method of working on and referring to carefully chosen sites would seem to be influenced by the "site specific" approach used by Smithson in the production of many of his earthworks and interventions.

13 I do not suggest that because Tacita Dean uses chemical based film as opposed to an electronic digital method for capturing and presenting her images that her work is somehow rooted in the past. The relationship between the different mediums is more complex than that with each informing the other. As Jussi Parikka, in reference to Thomas Elsaesser claims, the transition from chemical to digital image making marks a kind of break that could be investigated as an archaeological site to understand media culture, "...digitization might mark a change from the optico-chemical material grounding of film to the algorithmic (digital image and cinema), but it is more important as an epistemological rupture that has implications for how we see the whole spectrum of media technologies." (Parikka 2012, 21) I think this looking backwards and forwards between two technologies, and the cultures they operate(d) in is what makes Dean's work particularly revealing and valuable. It speaks to nostalgia as both a longing for what has been lost and a hope for what may still be to come, as in the utopian ideal of the television tower reaching to the sky.

Tacita Dean's practice involves an exploration of sites in locations scattered across the globe. Her method requires she visit these sites and begin production on the work while there; she films, photographs, writes and records sound on location. While *Fernsehturm* was produced in Berlin, Dean's adopted home, it was a work that was spurred by the artist's recent move to that city and by her subsequent investigation of her new surroundings. Notions of travel and wandering are thus linked to Dean's approach to making art and they are connected with her reflections on the technology and materiality of moving image presentation and its histories.¹⁴

As *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* shows, Robert Smithson's practice also engages a wandering approach, a discovering of places and structures through travelling to them and spending the time to look at them and to wander around; *Hotel Palenque*, Smithson's work for 35 mm slides from 1969, was produced on a trip to visit Palenque, the pre-Columbian ruins in Chiapas, Mexico. Smithson ended up documenting and commenting upon a nearby hotel, itself a potential ruin, a structure in a state of continuous repair,¹⁵ rather than the ruins of Palenque, and made a work that was the result of the restless eye and mind of the wandering artist. Smithson's 1970 film *Spiral Jetty*, that is at once a reflection on and a document of the construction of his monumental earthwork of the same name, ends with a shot from a helicopter of the artist walking over the crushed stones of his seminal creation in the Great Salt Lake, a spiral path, like a giant spool of film, inviting wandering.

14 The international infrastructure of the exhibiting and research institutions of contemporary art often require that the artist travels to participate in exhibitions, biennials, residencies and conferences. The nomadic working conditions of the contemporary artist inevitably surface in Dean's practice as they do in much art shown today. There are, however, recurring motifs of travel and wandering in Dean's work that resonate in her oeuvre and are characteristic of her approach.

15 Robert Hobbs writes of *Hotel Palenque* as it was first performed as a lecture to architecture students at the University of Utah: "Smithson presented ruins of an unimportant, run-down hotel that was being torn down in some places and newly built in others. The hotel was not razed at once, he informed the students, but instead it was destroyed slowly, with sensitivity." (Hobbs 1981, 165)

Travelogues¹⁶ of wandering artists

In 1997, Tacita Dean made the work *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty*. The work consisted of a 27-minute-long sound recording on a compact disc. After attending the Sundance Screenwriter's Workshop in Colorado in the late 1990s, Dean decided to drive with a friend to Great Salt Lake in Utah to look for Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* that had reportedly become visible again as the lake's water level had recently receded.¹⁷ Not certain she would be able to locate the earthwork, Dean followed directions on a photocopied sheet of paper provided by the Utah Arts Council at first by car and later on foot. She orally documented the journey, her dialogues with her travelling companion and a sort of spoken *carnet de route* on a tape recorder. Jenn Joy transcribed the audio recording for her 2014 book *The Choreographic*. Joy affirms the uncertainty of Dean's quest in 1997, with her quote from the recording. "*Tacita Dean's Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* begins and ends with a hesitation: "So ... where do we go? ... I'm not sure this is the Spiral Jetty." (Joy 2014, 40)

The recording is the work. In making it, Tacita Dean referred not only to Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, but also his *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* as Dean makes a work that is constituted of a journey by car and on foot and presented as its (recorded) spoken account. As with Smithson's earlier work, the journey and its account make up the piece.

Today it is easy to find the earthwork; the *Spiral Jetty* is now visible in the lake and can be effortlessly located with a satellite mapping service. We do not know if Tacita Dean ever found the *Spiral Jetty* on the road trip she took in the 1990s. She looked for it before images and

16 While travel writing is one of the earliest forms of literature that can be traced back to Homer's *Odyssey*, the modern travelogue was developed in the nineteenth century as a mode of presentation that used developments in photography and magic lantern projections to illustrate public presentations of the travels of a privileged class of Europeans and North Americans. In the late nineteenth century the American Elias Burton Holmes developed a form of public presentation using projected images and live voiceover recounting his travels. As a model, Burton Holmes's travelogue can be seen as an early method of recording the gaze of an invented eye, a travelling vision that seeks out the unexpected features and details of the unknown landscape. (Caldwell, Holmes, and Taschen 2006)

17 Tacita Dean writes of this trip in her essay "Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty." (Dean 2011, 30)

data from global positioning satellites were easily available for public consultation. Travelling then was still undertaken by using printed maps and, as in Dean's case, by relying on spoken and written directions that were susceptible to the sentiments and limited understanding of those giving them. There is an unpredictability inherent in this way of navigating unknown territory. This unpredictability leads to losing one's way but also to coming across the unexpected and the surprising.¹⁸

The road trip Tacita Dean took with a friend through the Utah desert has been rendered as a form of travelogue; the on-going commentary of their excursion recorded on audiotape. The enunciated uncertainty of not knowing where they were somehow acts as a spoken index of the barren and timeless landscape that they experienced while travelling to the *Spiral Jetty*. Dean later wrote of that landscape, echoing Smithson's own reflections on the crystallised geological time of the Great Salt Lake, "It has become a place of time travel, of prehistory and the future, of the sedimentation of thinking and the very matter and fabric of film." (Dean 2011, 30) The relationship between landscape, the moving image ("film" as Tacita Dean specifies) and travel is a threefold leitmotif that recurs in much of Dean's work. The three facets of this relationship, landscape (place), travel and travelling image form a recurrent prism through which to consider the function of the moving image in Dean's oeuvre.

Trying to find the Spiral Jetty ends with the artist and her travelling companion walking over the barren landscape near Rozel Point.

18 Precedents of works that result in the artist getting lost are numerous in recent art history and many of these predate both Dean's search for the *Spiral Jetty* and Smithson's own wanderings on the banks of the Passaic. The *dérives* initiated by the Situationniste internationale in the 1950s encouraged groups of artists and writers to wander the streets of Paris on foot, open to the encounter of the unexpected and the everyday. Thomas McDonough linked this practice to a reclamation of everyday experience against the mass projects of urbanisation during the post-war reconstruction of Europe. "With the city as their "theater of operations" their primary tactic was the derive (drift or drifting), which reflected the pedestrian's experience, that of the everyday user of the city." (McDonough 1994, 71) Another instance of walking as an everyday, chance operation is the series of artworks produced by Stanley Brouwn where the Dutch artist would adopt drawings made for him by passers-by, itineraries as doodles by people he met on the street. Dieter Roelstraete explains Brouwn's approach, "... in the work of Dutch Conceptualist Stanley Brouwn, who as early as 1960 started his series *This Way Brouwn* (1960-64), for which he would ask passers-by to sketch the way from point A to B on a piece of paper, which he would then stamp and appropriate as a work." (Roelstraete 2010, 19-20)

It begins with them in a car driving through the vast expanses of the American Southwest, a frame of reference for this work being the road movie.¹⁹ Dean writes of the journey she took in 1997, "I set off with directions from the Utah Arts Council and a friend from the Lab. We took the I-80 north from Salt Lake City. He had no idea what we were looking for." (Dean 2011, 30)

A road movie

Martin Beck is an artist who spends his time between Vienna and New York. His interest in the myths and the aesthetics of the North American landscape, perpetuated by much of the literature and film emanating from that continent, may come in part from his particular status of an outsider living there, understanding the culture, but being in a position to take a critical distance from it. Martin Beck looks back at one manifestation of the hippy exodus in the American West and attempts a road trip back to its site more than thirty years after its demise. His works, *Turn Take Merge* (2011) and *Directions* (2010), map a journey formed by some of the myths of the counter-culture, documenting his search for the location of the Drop City alternative community that was active in rural Colorado in the 1960s and 1970s.

I first became familiar with Beck's practice when visiting his exhibition *Martin Beck: the particular way in which a thing exists* at the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery in Montreal in January 2013. Intrigued by the way in which the exhibition space was used; the main gallery was sparsely occupied with a wall text taking prominence, I spent some time wandering among the collection of works shown. Behind the text was a room with a bench and a large video projection on one wall. I sat and watched a series of mostly static shots showing intersections of roads, in what looked to me like California, and views from inside a car

19 The road trip across the North American continent, facilitated by the implementation of a network of public highways in the 1950s, becomes a voyage of discovery for writers and artists of the post war generation. Jack Kerouac's 1957 counter-culture odyssey of self-discovery *On the Road* sets a template for the hippy generation's exodus to California and the west coast in the 1960s. A road trip was also instrumental in the conception and realisation of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* earthwork. Smithson's companion film to the earthwork, the eponymous *Spiral Jetty* (1970), borrows the tropes and structure of a road movie.

travelling these roads. The shots were interspersed with black pauses of seemingly disparate durations between 10 and 30 seconds each. The soundtrack, apparently recorded with the images, played back the hum and buzz of the car's engine and general traffic noise. There was no dialogue or commentary.

What, at first viewing, looked to be the outtakes of a road movie; the video documents a journey without telling a story, *Turn Take Merge* was in fact an exercise in rendering visible (and audible and temporal) the abstract directives of satellite mapping services. The key to the video was the wall text, *Directions* (2010), exhibited next to it. The directions, taken from a GPS mapping service, of how to drive from the corner of Haight and Ashbury Streets in San Francisco (a recognised address of the 1960s American counterculture) to the site of the former hippy community of Drop City in Colorado, are indicated as a series of manoeuvres, turns, merges and followings ("takes").

The travelogue is an illustrated, commented retracing of a journey. With *Turn Take Merge*, the commentary, reduced to the simple phrasing of map directions, defines and becomes the journey. Places (the intersections where the directions are given to turn, take or merge) become indices for the commentary, but no qualitative description is attributed to these places. The places' qualities are what is captured in the recorded images and sounds of them; the light, the colours, the noise of wind and traffic provide a spatiotemporal identity to the places shown in the projected images, but they seemingly have no narrative significance in the work other than as markers for the map directions.

Returning to watch *Turn Take Merge*, I understand that the locations shown in the video are the geographical points that the indications from *Directions* refer to. Thus a shot of an exit ramp in the California desert is where the mapping service has indicated a turn. I watch for the manoeuvres corresponding to the satellite directions, but still mesmerised by the scenes of empty roads and the continuous movement of the journey, I fall into a reverie, seeing, what seems to be an imaginary landscape unfold before me.

Our mediated memory of the American counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s brings forth images of mythical rural landscapes and

fantastic architecture. The history of Drop City²⁰, the experimental community in the Colorado countryside crystallises this memory of alternative living in experimental architecture. Former students of the University of Kansas purchased farmland in southern Colorado and invited people to build a community there. They collectively built dwellings from recycled materials in the form of domes, borrowing from the principles of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic architecture.²¹ Photos of these brightly painted organic structures sprouting from the rural countryside like fantastic mushrooms after a rainstorm often accompany discussions about alternative communities and their architecture.

These photographs are all that remain of Drop City. The land was sold to a farmer in the 1970s and the fantastical structures have long ago been dismantled. It is the impossibility of visiting this iconic site that resonates in Martin Beck's video. A journey is undertaken, methodically documented, to a place that is not there. It becomes a pilgrimage to nowhere,²² a journey of the imagination, an informed wandering through an infrastructure of displacement, an infrastructure that also allowed for Drop City to be built, that is the vast and far reaching North American highway system.²³

20 The name "Drop City" was derived from the term "Drop Art." a practice of putting on impromptu performances that the community's founders had developed while at college and that was informed by the "happenings" of Allan Kaprow among others. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drop_City, consulted June 20, 2014)

21 While not invented by the visionary American architect, R. Buckminster Fuller developed the geodesic dome as a practical structural technique for portable and permanent shelters. The domes have been used since the 1950s for military applications and in world expositions, notably in Montreal at Expo 67, and theme parks. According to Wikipedia, "A geodesic dome is a spherical or hemispherical thin-shell structure (lattice-shell) based on a network of geodesics (great circles) on the surface of a sphere or a hemisphere." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geodesic_dome, consulted January 20, 2016)

22 Martin Beck reminds us in his essay "this time we'll keep it a secret" that the location of the Drop City site is often wrongly indicated on maps and satellite mapping devices. In this contribution for the catalogue to his exhibition at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Beck corrects the directions he gives to the former commune in his own work *Directions*. "Correction: Do not turn at Freedom Rd Continue on County Rd-32/El Moro Rd - go 1.2 mi Turn right at County Rd-75 - go 65 ft" (Beck 2013, 188)

23 *Turn Take Merge* recalls the importance the myth of the automobile and the open road played in American culture and counterculture. This myth resonates in the history of post war minimal and land art in the United States. An often cited instance of this relationship was when the sculptor Tony Smith wrote about a drive he took with his students in the 1950s along an unfinished section of the New Jersey Turnpike. He wrote of the journey along the dark, unlit, non-delineated strips of black asphalt as a "revealing

Turn Take Merge can be looked at as a node where landscape (and notions of place), travel (as searching and wandering) and moving image (as a temporal language of shots) come together. Like with Tacita Dean's *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* and Robert Smithson's *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic*, *Turn Take Merge* operates as a site of reflection on wandering, place and recording. Time is at once experienced corporeally, through the time it takes to walk through the landscape, as duration, as the landscape contains its own geological, natural and historical time and then as differed time, through the playback of the film, audio recording, the reading of the text.²⁴

A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty*, *Turn Take Merge*: these are all examples of experimentation in visual, architectural, temporal, word-based, and hybrid forms. They manifest ways in which we may understand and model our relationship to our built environment, a relationship that is constantly being informed by moving image representations and technologies.

experience." He remarked on how, although the landscape was artificial, it was not art, yet it had the liberating effect of a reality that (until then) "had not had any expression in art." (Smith as quoted by Careri 2002, 121) Smith's drive along the unfinished, empty freeway was significant because it posited that the journey itself could be an art form. His journey and his later account of it are also significant in determining the development that minimal art and its later metamorphosis into land art would take.

24 Another temporal structure is suggested yet not made implicit in *Turn Take Merge*. The sequence of single shot scenes of movement interspersed with black pauses follows a sporadic rhythm that may suggest a loose musical form; as the viewers are confronted with a work whose temporal logic is not based on narrative conventions, they could interpret its structure as mathematical, the foundations of a musical score.









Chapter two
REMixING THE CITYSCAPE

Radio waves

In the early 1980s, when I was an art college student, I owned a portable music player. A common feature of student apartments; we would listen to music on these over their somewhat tinny built in stereo speakers. The device had an AM/FM tuner and played and recorded on cassette tapes; this configuration allowed for direct recording from the radio.

I used to experiment with this apparatus, using the manual tuning dial on its side to scroll through the AM and FM bands. When I picked up interesting signals, I would record these onto blank cassette tapes. One recording that I felt was particularly successful was when I picked up an evangelical radio show with a charismatic minister giving a sermon. As I turned the dial slightly I would pick up a public radio station playing a choir singing a Bach Passion. I put in a tape and pressed the record button and was able to record this "live mix" of the sacred music and the popular evangelist for several minutes. I later used this recording as a soundtrack for a video work.²⁵ I was aware that my serendipitous sampling method resonated beyond my practice into forms of "scratch" video art and alternative music "remixes" that proliferated in the 1980s.

Anri Sala made the work *Air Cushioned Ride* in 2007. During a road trip he filmed from a car as he circled a truck stop in the Southwest of the United States. The soundtrack is made up of the signals picked up on the car radio: a station playing baroque chamber music and another playing American country and western; the movement of the car around the trucks affects the radio's reception that repeatedly and sporadically shifts between the two stations.²⁶

²⁵ *Because I Know...* (1984), 5:00 minutes, colour, stereo, NTSC.

²⁶ Marie Fraser, in the catalogue of the exhibition that she curated of Anri Sala's work in Montreal, describes the making of *Air Cushioned Ride*: "Another example where a sound phenomenon is associated with a physical space is *Air Cushioned Ride* (2006), which is based on an instance of radio interference experienced by Anri Sala at a highway rest area in Arizona. As his car drew close to a group of parked trucks, a country music radio station, diverted by the presence of the vehicles, began breaking into the baroque music he was listening to. This intrusion of space into sound became the trigger for the film. As it pans around the obstructing vehicles, the camera records the sound of the radio, which varies according to the car's position in space." (Fraser 2011, 54)

With *Air Cushioned Ride*, Sala chanced upon, and used, similar phenomena involving commercial radio waves as I had done. Both of our works point to earlier works by avant-garde composers and sound artists. I was unaware of Michael Snow's performances and recordings made with short wave radios when, as an undergraduate student, I began playing with the radio tuner in my apartment and yet my experiment links up with Snow's work in this area.²⁷ Anri Sala, whose work uses, and is influenced by, many musical forms may have been aware of John Cage's early experiments with radio broadcasts.²⁸ My approach was very much informed by early scratch video and pre-digital audio dubbing and mixing techniques. It is telling to see how it has resonated and remained relevant over the years transgressing cultural and generational differences.

Air Cushioned Ride is important to look at (and listen to) when considering Sala's interest in hybrid musical forms and the continual use of the remix. The presence of these motifs would seem to reflect his international trajectory as an artist and the on-going references to cultural displacement in his work.

27 Michael Snow's *Two Radio Solos* (1980) is a work for audio cassette. Snow recorded directly onto cassette from a shortwave radio scanning the different stations he could pick up in an isolated cabin in the Canadian hinterland. He writes about the piece: "*Two Radio Solos* is two recorded unaltered "playings" of a short-wave radio, each about forty minutes long. They are "improvisations," which were developed as discovered, shifting between bands, stations, volume, bass and treble, etcetera. The batteries in the tape recorder I used (the tapes were made in a remote northern cabin, no electricity) were gradually dying during the playing and recording of one of them, something I didn't know until I played it back later, changed batteries, and heard the wonderful gradually-speeding-up result." (Snow 1993, 229)

28 In his concert *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* (1939), Cage used the broadcast capabilities of a radio station to transmit his live composition into a nearby theatre. As well as using a cymbal and a piano, Cage modulated the playback of a series of test frequency discs as music for his composition. Frances Dyson writes of the significance of this event and of how the composer's use of the discs resulted in the radio station itself becoming a musical instrument. "By choosing test tone records (Victor Frequency and Constant Note records) as the sonic material the phonographs would play, Cage transformed not only the phonographs but the entire radio studio into an instrument..." (Dyson 1992, 379)

A cultural wanderer

Born in Albania, Anri Sala is an artist whose life and career, in the spirit of the wandering artist, have transcended national boundaries. He moved from Tirana to Paris to study film soon after the formerly communist country of his birth opened its borders. He started his career in France and it has flourished there. He moved to Germany in the late 2000s and was living in Berlin when he made the work *Answer Me* (2008), and when I first heard him speak about *Air Cushioned Ride*.²⁹ When Anri Sala was chosen to represent France in the 2013 Venice Biennial, his work *Ravel Ravel Unravel* (2013) was presented in the German pavilion, not because he had been recently living in that country, but because France and Germany exchanged their national pavilions that year in a decision made by the curators and the exhibiting artists. The decision to exchange pavilions was, according to the Institut français, responsible for the French pavilion, for the artists and curators, "to participate in a vision of a common European culture, an integral part of a global cultural community."³⁰

Sala's transnational credentials would seem representative of many an artist of his generation active in the ostensibly borderless Schengen zone and in the European Community of the 21st century.³¹ But his work, much of it earlier having dealt with the difficulties faced by his homeland after the rupture in society caused by political and economic change, deals with another kind of statelessness, fearful of isolation and mired in the abandonment of obsolete ways of life, finding its way through the re-appropriation and remixing of cultural artefacts in danger of being erased from collective memory. References to films, pop songs and abandoned architecture recur in Sala's work. Two of these, *Answer Me* and *Le Clash* (2010), I will look at later in this chapter.

29 Anri Sala was interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist at the *L'école de Stéphanie* event created by Hans-Peter Feldmann at KW Berlin on May 1, 2010.

30 My translation of the French text: *Cet échange participe de cette vision d'une culture européenne commune, partie intégrante d'une communauté culturelle globale.* (<http://www.institutfrancais.com/fr/biennale-de-venise-2013>, accessed October 28, 2014)

31 I am thinking here of the many artists including Tacita Dean whose professional success depends upon exhibiting in international biennials and participating in residencies in different countries. Like Sala, many of them relocate to international urban centres, to New York, to London, to Amsterdam, to Paris, and more recently to Berlin.

While Anri Sala's work is important to look at for its formal experimentation and innovative re-appropriation of cultural histories, my intention here is to consider it in relation to where it has been exhibited. I look through his work at the architecture and urban setting of the museums and galleries of its exhibition.

Answer me

Galerie Johnen Berlin was located on the ground floor and in the basement of a modern pavilion-like structure that served, and was built in the same style as, the tower blocks that dominate a central urban neighbourhood in the former eastern sector of Berlin. Large floor-to-ceiling windows allowed for a penetration of the outside, trees, shrubs, a footpath, a parking lot, further away a boulevard and a *U-Bahn* entrance, into the reception area of the gallery.

Coming into the pavilion and before entering the gallery, the soundtrack of a video is heard. In the large darkened gallery, the views of the outside world now hidden behind walls, the sound of precise rhythmic drumming echoes in the space. The video projection that fills one wall of the gallery shows shots of a young man drumming intensely alternated with shots of a young woman desperately trying to speak over the sound.³²

The empty, resonant gallery space is echoed by the diegetic space of the video. The couple is filmed in a large, white-domed, seemingly abandoned structure. Reading the leaflet accompanying the exhibition, we learn that the video was shot and the sound recorded in the geodesic dome of a dismantled U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) listening station built on Teufelsberg, a hill of (war) rubble in West Berlin in the 1950s.³³ While shooting in this acoustically engineered space allowed for a particularly resonant recording of the drumming,

32 In the leaflet one learns that the dialogue suppressed by the sound is based on notes for a script by Michelangelo Antonioni for a film he made. It is a dialogue between a man and a woman, the woman trying to tell the man that she is leaving him, the man refusing to listen. Anri Sala like Antonioni is interested in the breakdown or gaps in the dialogue, rather than what is being said; in Sala's video, the young man seems to deliberately drown out the woman's voice with his drumming.

33 The video begins with a shot of this unusual structure, from a distance looking not unlike the white dome of Sacre-Coeur on Montmartre in Paris.

the question of listening, of communicating, is made complex, politicised and historicised by the loaded significance of this Cold War architecture.

We recognise again an interest in radio waves, communication, and the transmission and exchange of culture in this work. The listening station operated as a site to pick up stray radio transmissions from the German Democratic Republic and its allies. The material and ideological influences of (North) American politics, military procedures and technologies on the German landscape are not foregrounded by Sala in this work, but nor are they completely ignored by it. A more complex and more enduring influence touched on in this work is that of North American culture in the operation of the listening station and of the other NSA activities in Europe at that time. As well as "listening" to Soviet bloc communications and broadcasts, the occupying forces were also sending back propaganda and culture in the form of public radio broadcasts. Ostensibly for the United States troops stationed in Berlin and elsewhere in West Germany, the American Armed Forces Network (AFN) would play popular music over the radio waves, bringing American culture (and particularly youth culture) to both East and West Germans; the authorities of the German Democratic Republic were not able to block television and radio transmissions coming from the West.

It has been rumoured that when the listening station was operational, the reception of the intercepted signals would fluctuate greatly. One occasion when the signals were strongest was when the German American friendship festivities (*Deutsch-Amerikanisches Volksfest*) were taking place in the West Berlin neighbourhood of Zehlendorf. According to the rumours, it was discovered that the Ferris wheel erected for the event was relaying and boosting the radio signals from the section of the city under Soviet occupation. The big wheel was left standing for several days after the event ended in order to take advantage of the increased access to the radio signals from the East. Of course this rumour about the German American friendship activities echoes a commonly held sentiment of the time that the American presence in West Berlin and West Germany was not at all about international friendship, but about having a strategic foothold on the frontier with the Warsaw Pact states.

Recording in the listening station, Sala looks to Cold War history out of a kind of curiosity about this disappeared time. This searching for a historical loss is recurrent in his work. Marie Fraser, curator of Anri Sala's solo exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in 2011, claims that unlike his mother's generation who have a historical amnesia about the communist period in Albania, Sala wishes to explore the vestiges of this difficult time. This is made evident in Sala's 1998 film *Intervista* that starts with Sala finding footage of his mother as a young communist. She is seen talking, but the soundtrack to the film has been lost. The rest of the film shows Sala's search for the lost soundtrack, for his mother's words. He asks her what she was saying, but she insists she cannot remember. Fraser related to me in an interview: "What we see in *Intervista* is where his mother presents a kind of amnesia with regards to her own past. Anri is fascinated by this as he sees it as something that is lost. He will become interested in places that are in states of transition." (Fraser 2015, my translation)

Another important (American) cultural legacy of the listening station is its architecture. The signature domes of the structure were constructed using Buckminster Fuller's revolutionary geodesic technique. However, unlike the Biosphere of the United States pavilion in Montreal,³⁴ the structures were not used as emblems of that country's architectural and cultural innovations, but rather for their technical efficiency of providing an appropriate acoustic and physical space for picking up and monitoring stray radio signals.

Anri Sala's video shot in the listening station is called *Answer Me*. While the ruptured dialogue between the video's two protagonists, what Laurence Bossé would refer to as "a sort of language in the process of

34 The listening station was built using geodesic dome technique developed by the American visionary architect Buckminster Fuller. One of the most visible structures using this technique is the, still standing, former United States pavilion of Expo 67 in Montreal. Other applications of this technique were used in the building of alternative communities in the 1960s and 1970s, the most notable of these being the Drop City commune (referred to in Chapter one) in Colorado, in which residents built geodesic homes out of recycled car parts. Interestingly, the legacy of American built geodesic domes in Canada extends beyond and before the construction of the U.S. pavilion in Montreal in 1967. The Distant Early Warning (DEW) line built by the United States in northern Canada to intercept Soviet missiles which could be launched over the Arctic Ocean comprised a series of geodesic structures which proved to be resilient shelters from the harsh weather conditions of the North.

elaboration,"(Bossé 2004, 14) seems to act out the title, there are other answers to Sala's directive. The acoustic space of the recording, a space engineered by an avant-garde approach to modern architecture is answered by the acoustic space of the pavilion at Schillingstraße 31,³⁵ itself a modern structure, but one which was developed for another purpose.

Retrieved modernity

In the period between 1959 and 1965, as part of the post war reconstruction of Berlin, the authorities of the German Democratic Republic opted for a style of architecture and urban planning known in German as the *nachgeholte Moderne*, (belated or retrieved modernity).³⁶ This style favoured clean unadorned International style buildings, towers of apartment blocks interspersed with smaller structures that served as shops, services and social centres. These were surrounded by open public spaces, both paved, and park-like with trees and lawns. While much of this architecture still serves to provide housing and other community needs and commercial services to the urban population, the pavilion structures whose elegant transparency, lack of ornamentation and interpenetration of inside and outside, like the one found at Schillingstraße 31,³⁷ seem to have lost the social and cultural functions they may have once provided.³⁸

Like much post war urban planning in western Europe, the landscaping of the apartment blocks and other structures (including the

35 The former street address of Galerie Johnen Berlin, where the exhibition was held.

36 This period is marked by the coming into power of Nikita Khrushchev in the Soviet Union and the shift to a more open international culture, particularly in architectural design, that resulted in the Soviet Union and the satellite socialist states, including the German Democratic Republic.

37 Galerie Johnen Berlin has since moved locations and the occupation of the pavilion at 31 Schillingstraße has changed several times since the move. No other gallery of contemporary art with an international reputation has occupied the pavilion since the departure of Galerie Johnen in 2010.

38 Perhaps the most visible example of this architecture is the Café Moskau on the nearby Karl-Marx Allee. Designed in 1959 by Josef Kaiser and completed in 1964, the Café Moskau featured floor to ceiling windows in the ground floor of this once prestigious café and cultural centre. Since reunification, the Café has been used temporarily for a variety of purposes but has so far failed to fulfil a sustainable social or cultural role in the city.

pavilion at Schillingstraße 31) in the *nachgeholte Moderne* projects of Berlin derive their combination of nature and architecture from the *Ville Contemporaine* projects developed by Le Corbusier, who was himself influenced by the Garden Cities of 18th and 19th century Europe.

Anna Maria Heckmann gives the example of Fritz Haller's unrealised (and unrealisable³⁹) *totale stadte* (total city) conceived for Berlin (and other cities) in 1968.

Haller concretized his model for the city of the future using, among others, the example of Berlin. First of all, it envisaged strict geometric layout, which was to straddle the entire city regardless of special geographical features such as hills or the course of rivers or lakes. (Heckmann 2015, 96)

Haller's monumental and utopian plan reflected a socialist ideology that privileged a centralisation and a systemisation of the management of living conditions, but it was also developed in response to a fear of social upheaval due to a deteriorating urban fabric. "... By means of an ideal systemizing of urban functions such as administration, leisure time, housing and working, he hoped to counter the feared urban chaos..." (Heckmann 2015, 96)

Haller's proposal looked back, as did, to some extent, the realised urban projects of the 1960s in East Berlin, to radical housing and city plans from the 1920s. Heckmann saw this looking back to past urban avant-garde models as a reaction to the rise of popular social movements in both eastern and western Europe in the tumultuous decade of the 1960s. "Considering the expectation of a future with entirely changed conditions and the simultaneously associated fears, such radical ideas were becoming more attractive again in the atmosphere of upheaval during the 1960s." (Heckmann 2015, 96) Recalling Le Corbusier's *Ville contemporaine de trois millions d'habitants* proposal of 1922, Fritz Haller's *totale stadte* project would have concentrated housing into settlement units for millions of people comprised of a series of high rise blocks surrounded by parkland.

39 Heckmann quotes Fritz Haller who wrote in *totale stadt. ein modell*, "no one will build a city according to this model," (Haller 1968, 9)

In much of western Europe the Left were very sceptical of Le Corbusier's urban renewal projects and of their 18th and 19th century antecedents. Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, saw the social space of the city to be made overly complex and compromised by commercial and hegemonic interests, a situation that would not be resolved by radically rearranging the areas for vegetation, buildings and people in post-war urban reconstruction. "(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder." (Lefebvre 1992, 73)

In his essay written with Catherine Régulier, "The Rhythmanalytical Project" Lefebvre and Régulier remarked on the hierarchy of homogeneity and fragmentation of the modern city which was due in part to the industrial mass production of architectural elements and materials. (Lefebvre and Régulier 210) Lefebvre was concerned that the homogenisation of urban space and the repetition of architectural elements, by facilitating communication and surveillance, would lead to the management and control of the populous. Lefebvre was writing mostly about architectural projects in the West, and particularly about those in Paris. However, with what we know now of daily life in the former German Democratic Republic, we see how the *nachgeholte Moderne* architecture may have also served the controlling state apparatus of a centralised socialist society.

Irma Leinauer writing about modern planning around the Karl-Marx-Allee in the 1960s explains how formerly experimental, repetitive, mass production techniques became accepted building processes: "New building technologies grew beyond the experimental stage: *Plattenbauweise*, or prefabricated concrete slab construction, became the basis for all residential building." (Leinauer 2015, 249) New residential sectors were to be built using prefabricated concrete elements. This was more cost efficient than previous building methods and resulted in uniform architectural elements arranged in a repetitive layout.

In terms of urban planning, the five story residential buildings are striking not because of their individual design, but

their arrangement. They were placed in lines in groups of two or three behind one another, and with shared green spaces formed the core of a residential group. (Leinauer 2015, 154)

The urban planning based on *Plattenbauweise* also resulted in turning the *Innenhof*, or inner courtyard configuration of apartment building, prevalent in 19th and early 20th century Berlin, inside out. Instead of the building surrounding a closed off green space, the green space surrounded the buildings, buffering them from the streets.

Urban planning turned away from closed block structures and was now based on the spatial principle of open plan building. Open spaces were no longer framed by buildings, but structured by them. (Leinauer 2015, 149)

Around the pavilion housing Galerie Johnen is a wooded space, unfenced and accessible from the street. This natural backdrop insulates the pavilion from the traffic and city noise and separates it from the repetitive concrete mass of the surrounding housing blocks.

Garden cities

In *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, Manfredo Tafuri, an influential Italian Marxist architectural historian, writes in 1973 about the abbé Marc Antoine Laugier's seminal *Essai sur l'Architecture* first published in 1753. One of the first modern architectural philosophers, Laugier proposed an Enlightenment approach to building, privileging structures harmonious with nature, thus laying the foundation for the garden city movement that took hold in Europe in the 19th century and indirectly influenced the shared green space arrangement of the Berlin *Plattenbau* in the 1960s.⁴⁰ Tafuri, who saw

⁴⁰ A more direct influence on the urban renewal of Berlin in the 1960s would have been Le Corbusier's plans for a new cityscape outlined in his book *Urbanisme* from 1925. Referring to the long wide corridors between buildings in his proposal for an extended urban landscape, Le Corbusier writes, "We take advantage of these new axes to introduce trees into the city. Leaving aside the consideration of hygiene for now, it can be assumed, aesthetically speaking, that the meeting of geometric elements of buildings and scenic elements of vegetation is a necessary and sufficient conjugation of the cityscape."

architectural history as an on-going operation always open to contestation, criticised Laugier's essay, feeling that it rendered the city as natural and picturesque and ignored its social dimension.

When in 1753 Laugier enunciated his theories of urban design, officially initiating Enlightenment architectural theory, his words revealed a twofold inspiration. On the one hand, that of reducing the city itself to a natural phenomenon. On the other, that of going beyond any a priori idea of urban organization by applying to the city the formal dimensions of the aesthetic of the picturesque. (Tafuri 1976, 3-4)

Tafuri was wary of the garden city projects that led from the writings of Laugier as he felt that these subverted the harsh reality of the rural peasant to one of bucolic splendour. This idealised natural setting would then be transposed to the city, leaving the peasant to wallow in the impoverished countryside abandoned by the nobility and the bourgeoisie that had emigrated from their country estates to the newly verdant garden cities.

As is often the case with many post war residential developments and despite its park-like setting, the neighbourhood surrounding Galerie Johnen displayed little community investment and activity, its residents barely visible in its public spaces. Manfredo Tafuri's criticism of the garden city as a model for a remedy to social crisis would seem to ring true when we consider the state of emptiness and communal dysfunction that many of the post war garden cities find themselves in today. While the area around Schillingstrasse and the Jannowitzbrücke S-Bahn station in Berlin provides comfortable homes to many Berliners, the uneasy relationship between the landscaped greenery and the imposing, partially inadequate, architecture presents the visitor with impressions of misled ideals and unattained civic solutions.

Pihlajamäki, an ambitious post-war residential development in the eastern suburbs of Helsinki is an example to explore when considering

(Le Corbusier 1994, 221-224, my translation) Reading Tafuri one remarks, however, that the garden city as a concept of city planning and urban beautification has a long evolution that preceded and influenced Le Corbusier's radical plans for the city of the 20th century.

the legacy of the modern garden city. It was built as a “forest city” starting in 1959 and into the early 1960s to provide quality housing to a growing urban population. A prestigious team of architects (Olli Kivinen, Lauri Silvennoinen, Esko Korhonen and Sulo Savolainen) designed simple and elegant high and low rise buildings that would complement, and not compete with, the striking natural setting around them.⁴¹

I first visited this area out of curiosity while staying in Helsinki. I had seen from the highway the rows of grey tower blocks on top of a wooded rocky outcrop. I mapped out the area and made my way on foot from the where the bus to Lahti stopped on the highway, climbing the stairs leading from the low rise shopping centre that took me up to the summit where I had seen the buildings. The grey concrete of their surfaces reflected and blended with the fading winter sky. The imposing presence of the vertical oblong structures on the landscape was tempered by their muted, matte colour. As a light mist moved in, the buildings seemed to disappear into the sky, rendering the forest and rocks more present. Indeed, Pihlajamäki was not simply an insertion of buildings into a landscape, but rather a total reworking of land and architecture, a woodland garden city.

Making my way back to the centre of Helsinki, I had to wait for a bus at the suburb's shopping centre. From a distance, this elegant structure evokes the clean lines and open spaces of the best 1950s American strip mall suburban architecture; an expansive concrete platform perforated with skylights drew a horizontal line through the hilly landscape subtly marking the social and commercial hub of the community. I walked inside; the bus wasn't coming right away. The illusion of utopian town planning set into a natural setting was broken by the dilapidated state of the commercial centre. Other than a supermarket, the businesses in the centre were either boarded up or in disrepair. It became clear to me that the coalescing of a community that the landscaped architecture and visionary urban design was planned for had somehow been destabilised over the years. My sporadic knowledge

41 For a description and history of Pihlajamäki see the website from the city of Helsinki about the architectural trail running through the development. (http://www.hel.fi/hel2/kanslia/pihlajamaki_arkkitehtuuripolku/index3.html, accessed January 27, 2016)

of contemporary life in Helsinki informs me that Pihlajamäki is not the most desirable address for an artist or professional; the suburb's limited desirability regrettably relegates it to a forested enclave for residents who are unable to access better living conditions.

Answer me again

Anri Sala staged *Answer Me* under the iconic geodesic dome of the Teufelsberg listening station, a former NSA facility. Sala's work revisits this site, exploring it for its unique acoustic and visual properties, but he is interested in it also because it was abandoned and no longer served the function for which it was built, for its redundancy. In our interview, Marie Fraser noted that as, “someone who has lived through major political transition,” Anri Sala “will go on to become interested in places that are themselves in states of transition.” (Fraser 2015, my translation) The listening station frames *Answer Me* in a recent history of political transition. Its exhibition in the former pavilion that housed Galerie Johnen further frames the work in an architecture in a process of a subtle yet complex transition.

Not abandoned, but in transformation, the buildings that served the community, schools, shops and social centres, now serve other functions, as small businesses, private galleries and storage facilities. The green spaces, overgrown in areas, no longer frame the formal rectilinear architectural arrangement, but cover it up, leaving concrete elements to appear at random through the foliage. It is as if the neighbourhood itself is wandering away from its rationally engineered purpose towards another destiny as yet undetermined. It is in the context of this wandering history materialised that I myself wander into an art exhibition and try to make some sense of the experience.

The next time I had the possibility to see Sala's work *Answer Me*, was two years later in his exhibition in the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM). Again the site of urban transformation surrounding the exhibition conditioned my viewing of it and my thoughts about the work. With the Berlin exhibition of Anri Sala's *Answer Me*,⁴² the

42 *Answer Me* is a HD video produced in an edition of six. The manner and the space in which the video is displayed depends on the context of the presentation. Anri Sala

abandoned space of the Cold War listening station has been transposed into another architecture whose purpose has also been made (partially) redundant through social and political change.⁴³ While the video, like much of Sala's other work, addresses issues of communication and brings in elements of popular (music) culture, it also exposes architectural and urban spaces that have at once been evacuated of meaning and yet still seem to resonate the possible futures they once promised.

The architectures of Sala's exhibitions could be considered as sites that presuppose their potentialities. The architecture of the abandoned structure on Teufelsberg thus points not only to its antecedent, the US National Security Agency listening station, a landmark of the political climate of the Cold War, but also, concomitantly, it presupposes the utopian promise of Buckminster Fuller's engineering projects around the world. Likewise, the architecture of the pavilion situated at Schillingstraße 31 presupposes the social conditions of Berlin before and after 1989, also the global ambitions and pitfalls of International style architecture including the centuries old problems inherent in transposing the bucolic and the "natural" onto urban life.

As a visitor to Berlin I perceive, in the setting of Sala's exhibition in Galerie Johnen, an architecture of rational promise, the easy access from the street, the large windows opening onto nature, the large space, but I do not recognise the building and cannot determine what its original function was. I presuppose the somewhat rigid, yet elegant, use

will "remix" his videos and installations in the variable conditions of different exhibition spaces. The exhibition of *Answer Me* in Montreal was incorporated into a larger group of works that Sala has called *Purchase not by Moonlight*.

43 Anri Sala has also participated in exhibitions making use of abandoned spaces as was the case when I first saw his work as part of a group exhibition in the soon to be demolished former Palast der Republik in Berlin in 2005. It is not my intention, at this point to discuss the tendency for contemporary artists and art organisations to make use of, occupy and transform neglected and abandoned urban spaces. The fact that the Johnen Galerie Berlin, which represents Anri Sala and exhibited *Answer Me*, was located in such a space is representative of a trend that galleries in Berlin have been following since the fall of the wall and internationally galleries have been following for several decades. The occupation of disused factories and warehouses in Soho in the 1960s and later in the meat packing district of west Manhattan would be the most obvious examples of this trend on an institutional level. One of the first successful artists' centres to be established in the former East Berlin is Kunstwerke (KW) which occupies the premises of a former margarine factory.

function of its past as well as the more flexible and haphazard possibilities for its future. Citing Michelangelo Antonioni, Buckminster Fuller and jazz drumming, Anri Sala enables me to understand *Answer Me* as a work informed by and building on an avant-garde canon of architecture, film and music. The installation presupposes a model for future works by Sala and others using tight contrapuntal image sound relationships and developing these through spatial arrangements within architecture.

The exhibition of Anri Sala at the MACM featured several works that looked at utopian architecture, both as ruins, places of regret and as sites for potential reutilisation and urban regeneration. These included both the architecture of the former socialist republic of Albania, his homeland, and post war town planning projects in western Europe.

Looking at his work in the MACM, I cannot avoid being reminded of the large-scale reconstruction of the public space around the museum being undertaken during Anri Sala's exhibition there. To arrive on foot to the MACM in the spring of 2011, one had to negotiate a street temporarily transformed into a construction site; metal barricades, orange and white traffic bollards, and wood siding covered in posters and graffiti guided the prospective museumgoer past the debris of torn down buildings and around stacks of construction material. At the time of Sala's exhibition, the streets surrounding the MACM were being renovated to form a new urban space in Montreal, the Quartier des spectacles. Designed to facilitate the presentation of popular music acts on outdoor stages during the summer festivals in the downtown core, the Quartier des spectacles promised a cityscape free of motorised vehicles in which streets and sidewalks merge to form an immense urban patio.

Wayfinding

The revitalisation of a large part of the urban core of the city, Montreal's Quartier des spectacles, is, as I write, almost complete. The urban space centred around the recently reconfigured Place des festivals accommodates large groups of festivalgoers who sit and stand outside on the emptied streets and impromptu plazas to listen to music and watch performances played on temporary stages. In the winter months, when the festivals are over, the unified and levelled space makes the

distances between the buildings (where there might be shelter) and from other people traversing the Quartier tangible and arduous.

The term “wayfinding” was developed by Kevin Lynch, borrowing on theories of how animals might find their way to food and shelter using a combination of their sensory and extra-sensory perception, to describe how people might construct an image of, and negotiate urban space. Wayfinding involves an awareness of what Lynch refers to as “territoriality” (O’Rourke 2013, 111), the tendency to demarcate and protect the immediate territory surrounding one’s body when in a situation with other people close by. When wayfinding the space of the (empty) Quartier des spectacles it is the potential of large distances from the other people and from architecture that confronts and confuses our sense of “territoriality”.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau saw the inert geometrical space, often drawn by urban planners as a location (*lieu*) with the action of transgressing it rendering it “a practiced place,” (de Certeau 1984, 117) a space (*espace*). Thus moving through an urban place, constrained by regulations and prescribed uses engages the place and transforms it into an active space, opened up to a multiplicity of possibilities for it to be perceived and experienced. The Quartier des spectacles is a geographically and judicially defined sector of the city. It serves, ostensibly, to provide entertainment as spectacle to the public. It is also a space in which mandated corporations may conduct business. Certain practices are prohibited if they jeopardise the business activities of these corporations in the Quartier.⁴⁴ The spectacle that the Quartier performs is thus ideologically and economically linked to consumption. In this manner it invites a critique based on Guy Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle*. Debord saw that the late capitalism of the 1960s was rendering everything into spectacle, “everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.” (Debord 1983, para. 1) Thus the purported function of the Quartier des spectacles to provide spectacular entertainment is subsumed by an agenda of corporate consumerism which itself is manifested as spectacle.

44 Security in and around the quartier can be aggressive, often to prevent passers-by from bringing refreshments into the area that they would otherwise buy from the mandated vendors on the site.

The process of urban transformation that led to the creation of the Quartier des spectacles has included attempts to influence the nature of commercial and entertainment activities around the Place des Arts. A boutique selling erotic clothing shut down, as have many of the local striptease clubs. A block of buildings facing the new headquarters of the Équipe Spectra, the entertainment corporation responsible for Montreal’s Jazz and Francolies festivals, was recently demolished. This demolition was preceded by the closure of Le Spectrum de Montréal, a popular music club housed in the block now razed.

Le Spectrum de Montréal

The mixed use block that contained the Spectrum de Montréal and other live music venues, (including the erstwhile reggae club, The Rising Sun), frequented and supported by a dynamic yet heterogeneous and unpredictable group of music aficionados, was torn down in order to develop the lands around the Quartier into commercial and residential space. The new space for entertainment was socially engineered to be more lucrative to the corporate partners and the razed space surrounding it became speculative investment property. Somewhat in the opposite direction from the area surrounding the former location of Galerie Johnen in Berlin, the space of Quartier des spectacles was transformed from a multi-use urban space open to different possibilities to a highly defined and controlled territory operated on a corporate and political agenda.

When negotiating urban space, we “wayfind,” we use a combination of our sensory and extra sensory perception to understand where we are and where we are going. We also use our experience; our memories of an urban space are imprinted in our minds and we use these mental imprints (part of what Lynch would refer to as our “mental maps”) to find our bearings. When a remembered city landscape has been violated, altered through the rapid destruction of large chunks of its architecture, our mental maps become redundant, or at best inaccurate.⁴⁵

45 Perhaps this doesn’t matter if we use mobile devices with GPS tracking to find our way, but I would argue that the physically altered urban landscape affects our awareness of where we are in a way that the virtual description of space of the mobile device cannot account for. Our negotiation of urban space is corporeal. We feel the wind gusting

Built in the early 1950s as the Alouette Theatre, the location of Le Spectrum occupied the centre of a block that once housed one of the city's first cinemas. The will to demolish buildings in Montreal, as in many cities in North America, on the pretence that it benefits the economy, gives the illusion that the city is progressing, rebuilding itself as a more ideal place to live, work and visit. In reality, much of what is torn down in the city is functional and quite adaptable to different uses. The demolition is usually not followed immediately by a rebuilding project; more than five years after it has been torn down, the block that housed Le Spectrum is empty, a fenced off vacant lot.

Sala's video *Dammi i Colori* (2003) was shown in his exhibition at MACM, as was his short video work of the same year *Time After Time* (2003).⁴⁶ These both show contemporary images of Sala's native Tirana. They demonstrate the incongruities of that city's socialised architecture and centralised urban planning with the market based and impoverished economy in Albania at the beginning of this century; the horse Sala filmed in *Time After Time* should not belong anymore to the modern urban setting that seems to have been constructed around and despite its presence.

In *Dammi i Colori* the plan of the city's then mayor Edi Rama to re-affect the decrepit and somewhat obsolete architecture of the *ancien régime* is documented by Sala. As the fragile economy of Albania would not allow for a massive urban rebuilding project, Rama opts instead for a project of embellishment and of aesthetic rejuvenation of many of the capital's public and residential buildings; with the participation of the city's inhabitants, he has many buildings painted in

between buildings, the sun in our eyes and the smooth surface of the worn concrete under our feet. I believe these sensorial indices guide our movements as much as geographical coordinates do.

46 *Time After Time* is Sala's disturbing, yet hauntingly touching unedited single take of an unaccompanied horse standing beside a Tirana motorway in the dark. Patricia Falguières suggests the video captured the uncanny atmosphere of Tirana at the time it was shot. She describes her experience of seeing and recognizing the horse in *Time After Time*. "The beam of a headlight has revealed it to our incredulous gaze: the pedestal, before which it is posed - like a monument awaiting placement - is a fast-lane barrier, a concrete motorway guardrail. It is an exposed, or rather a displaced, animal, a stray, out of place like the dogs in Tirana that have turned wild and seem to have escaped from a deserted zoo..." (Falguières 2004, 55)

bright colours removing the drab conformity of the pre-revolution cityscape.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Edi Rama's project allows for the original forms of the architecture and the basic layout of the city to remain intact. In Montreal, like in many North American cities, in the purported interests of economic growth, destruction and disorientation in the urban fabric are recurrent phenomena.

The renewal that was undertaken in the Quartier des spectacles around the MACM resulted in a remodelling of the urban layout; streets were widened and their courses altered. It also necessitated the demolition of whole city blocks and the removal of a working neighbourhood of artists, musicians, dancers and other actors in the cultural sector; as well as razing of the block housing the Le Spectrum de Montréal, a building on the northeast perimeter of the Quartier, home of Galerie Clark and where hundreds of artists had their studios, was demolished. Institutionalised culture was preserved in this process; the Place des Arts, home of the Symphonie orchestrale de Montréal, Opéra Montréal, several professional theatre companies and the MACM, was given a new gentrified urban context. Corporate culture, in the form of the heavily subsidised and privately sponsored festivals staged in the new Quartier, reconfigured to accommodate large crowds of spectators and consumers. The underground and alternative music and art communities saw most of their venues and workspaces disappear from the downtown landscape in this process of sweeping urban renewal.

Anri Sala's exhibition at the MACM was viewed, by some, in the context of this controversial process being acted out at the time of his show. The exhibition was inscribed within the institutional context of the MACM, the *Place des Arts* (the MACM's landlord) and the larger

47 In Berlin the architects who developed the area around Galerie Johnen in the 1960s assigned a distinct palette of colours for the different apartment blocks and accompanying structures. Since reunification, many of these buildings have been painted over by the new building owners and property developers without respect to the original architectural plan. Where the mayor's renewed, post socialist, colour scheme was welcomed in Tirana, in Berlin the nonconformity to artistic integrity was met with pointed criticism by at least one architectural historian. Irma Leinauer writes of developments in the area: "By the end of the 1990s, a large number of the apartment buildings had been renovated, but without any overarching design guidelines. The insulation systems installed on top of the characteristic ceramic façades were painted in inexplicable colours and patterns." (Leinauer 2015, 154)

Quartier des spectacles project. Whether or not Anri Sala or Marie Fraser had a position regarding the urban upheaval that resulted from the Quartier des spectacles project, Sala's exhibition nevertheless became part and party to its spectacle.⁴⁸

Le Clash

One of Anri Sala's works in his exhibition at the MACM, *Le Clash* (2010) was filmed outside of the Salle des Fêtes, a concert hall in the Grand Parc housing project in Bordeaux where The Clash played before the hall was condemned, when the asbestos used in its construction was found to be toxic, and closed in 1993. In my interview with her, Marie Fraser explained to me what she knew of the circumstances of the *Salle's* closure and why it interested Anri Sala.

The Salle des fêtes in Bordeaux is also an abandoned space, the reasons why it was abandoned, the social changes that it creates in the urban landscape and not just the architectural transformation, but how architecture is linked to questions that are much more social. (Fraser 2015, my translation)

Fraser explained that Sala's interest in the British punk group The Clash came about because of the history of the Salle.

Anri Sala did not know of The Clash. He did not have access to European and North American culture. He was invited to Bordeaux to do a project. He came across this concert hall covered in graffiti and closed down. And it was closed down because of the presence of asbestos which could be a danger to people attending concerts in it. And he found out that in this closed-down space concerts were given by important popular music groups in the 1980s, including The Clash and that is when he discovered The Clash. (Fraser 2015, my translation)

⁴⁸ In some ways, most cultural players in Montreal are part and party to the uncomfortable spectacle that is the Quartier des spectacles. My own work has been included in exhibitions at the MACM, and as a professor I have coordinated student projects produced by and exhibited in the Place des Arts.

The Clash never played Le Spectrum de Montréal; the group had begun to disband by the time the club opened, but in 2001 their singer Joe Strummer played the small venue with his band The Mescalessros as did The Cure, Depeche Mode, New Order, Blur and many other post punk and new wave acts on their North American tours including Public Image Limited who opened the venue in 1982. Closed down long after the Salle des fêtes in Bordeaux, and for different reasons, the loss of Le Spectrum affected a generation of popular music fans in Montreal. Both venues would have functioned socially, as places outside of the mainstream to meet up and listen to music.

One of the motivations for the Quartier des spectacles project was to provide a space to listen to live popular music in Montreal. In some ways Le Spectrum's success paved the path for the Quartier des spectacles development and for its own subsequent closing; the venue was operated by the powerful Équipe Spectra who also manage the Festival de Jazz and the Francofolies in Montreal.⁴⁹ This cultural event organiser and talent agency was the commercial force behind the City of Montreal's project to transform part of the city into the Quartier des spectacles. Le Spectrum was closed, in part, because of the success of the Quartier project; due to the attraction of the newly developed urban area there was much speculation in the market for the real estate surrounding it. The block housing Le Spectrum was razed in order to develop a new residential complex on its site.

The rather awkward layout of the entrance to Le Spectrum, (one walked along a carpeted tunnel lined with posters of past concerts before entering the auditorium, stairs led to a narrow, rarely occupied balcony), has made for mnemonic spatial associations with the expectations of the music heard and the people met there. Le Spectrum was often criticised for being too expensive, for charging too much for drinks and for having bad sightlines for people sitting in the back of the room. I know of these comments because I attended many

⁴⁹ According to the public declarations of Équipe Spectra, culture and entertainment are synonymous with a sense of wonder and discovery. Their mission is to offer cultural productions of the highest-quality, accessible to all. The notion of accessibility is, however, not always put into practice as people entering the site are often subject to much stricter surveillance and security measures than they would be in other public spaces in the city. (<http://www.equipespectra.ca/equipe-en/who-we-are.aspx>, accessed December 8, 2013)

concerts there, mostly in the 1990s. The venue had its shortcomings and these are not really missed, but its place in a personal and collective cultural history is important, mostly for what the people who attended events there made of it. Le Spectrum thus remains in personal and collective memory, in part, because of the incongruity of its architecture. It was an architecture that had been adapted to its function, but never completely functional.

In contrast to the spatial incongruity of Le Spectrum, the planning and architecture of the Quartier des spectacles are engineered to accommodate large-scale cultural spectacles and their audiences. Like with any apparatus of social ordering there is a unity and coherence to its form. Tafuri writes that “a language of building types” has a “superior principle of order.” (Tafuri 1976, 15) The reworking of the urban space of the Quartier des spectacles corresponds to a coherent vocabulary of architecture and planning. Tafuri continues, “but the configuration of the single building types tends to destroy the very concept of the historically developed language as a whole.” (Tafuri 1976, 15) The singularity of the architecture of Le Spectrum (and of all of the buildings comprising its now razed block) had the effect of confusing and obfuscating, but also of opening up, the language of the city. In this way the site held a liberating potential for the people that gathered there to hear music and to socialise.

In much the same way, the music of The Clash (which along with other music of the punk and post-punk generations was a re-working of older popular music forms) was considered liberating as it broke up and confused the language of the musical entertainment hegemony in the 1970s represented by a top heavy industry that favoured established acts and influenced, through incentives, paybacks and control over ownership of radio stations what would be played on the airwaves. A hegemony of music industry players dictated popular taste and their control over the market resulted in the dominance of what has since been called “corporate rock” in the 1970s.⁵⁰ The engineered success of bands like Foreigner, The Eagles and Fleetwood Mac levelled the

⁵⁰ The arrival of punk bands in the United Kingdom in the second half of the 1970s was a refreshing cultural change, in part, because the bands initially operated outside of the dominant music industry, starting their own record labels, pressing their own records and developing an independent distribution network.

playing field of taste in popular music much in the same way that the Quartier des spectacles forty years later has levelled the urban space for experiencing music and other forms of popular culture, making it formally repetitive and risking to render its cultural value obsolete. “Formal invention seems to declare its own primacy, but the obsessive reiteration of the inventions reduces the whole organism to a sort of gigantic useless machine.” (Tafuri 1976, 15)

Improvisation

Claire Bishop wrote that, when exhibiting video installations, artists and curators often choose to recreate the conditions of cinema viewing, to immerse the viewer in an acoustically dampened, darkened space in which to “critically” watch and listen to the audio-visual artwork.

This enthrallment with the ‘surroundings’ of cinema is the impulse behind so much contemporary video installation: its dual fascination with both the image on screen and the conditions of its presentation. Carpeting, seating, sound insulation, size and colour of the space, type of projection (back, front or free-standing) are all ways with which to seduce and simultaneously produce a critically perceptive viewer. (Bishop 2015, 95-96)

The cinema as a model for video, and moving image, presentation has also been regularly contested by artists, curators and video programmers when showing and exhibiting moving image material. Marie Fraser, in the catalogue for *Anri Sala*, the eponymously titled exhibition of his works at the MACM, writes of the difficulties of staging time-sensitive, moving image exhibitions in the spatiotemporal constraints of the museum; these are the realities of an architectural space, with its acoustic and optical properties, as well as an institutional space, with limits on the time a viewer might be able to spend with the work. In the case of Sala’s exhibition, Fraser eschewed the temptation to present the work as a narrative, with the possibility to borrow from cinematic structuring of temporal elements. She instead, and quite appropriately in the case of Sala, looked to musical structures, specifically the musical score, as models for the exhibition form.

When we reflect today on the relationship between artworks, and try to imagine new foundations for the concept of the exhibition, we often have recourse to narrative or filmic models – the story, the script. But such models invariably remain rooted in theories of language and struggle with an enduring linearity. It seems clear that the idea of a musical score introduces both an abstract dimension and a more powerful, extreme experience of space and time. (Fraser 2011, 53)

The temporal structuring of the musical score is evident in much of Sala's work, the rhythmic drumming in *Answer Me*, the mathematical Baroque composition played by the chamber orchestra in *Air Cushioned Ride*, but another, more open and complex, musical form is experienced by the visitor to the MACM exhibition, that of the improvisation of many musical parts.⁵¹

Early in his career, John Cage rejected the idea that a composer would write a score, but rather he saw the practice of musical composition as the writing of parts that would later be rearranged (and remixed) based on the time and place of their performance and on the reception of the audience. As these are varying conditions they allow for a different interpretation of the composition at every performance and from each member of the audience.⁵² The pre-determined presentation of a musical score was undone by Cage, liberating its parts, much in the same way Anri Sala, following on from Nam June Paik and other media artists since, undoes the pre-determined, scheduled screening of a video work, in order to fragment its space

51 Anri Sala showed the work *Long Sorrow* (2005) in his exhibition in Montreal. For this video he filmed the jazz musician Jemeel Moondoc playing his saxophone suspended from a window of a high rise apartment building in Berlin. The soundtrack is the music played by Moondoc improvising to the urban landscape surrounding him.

52 Marc Treib, writing about Edgard Varèse's *Poème électronique* quotes John Cage describing how the American composer undoes musical composition in order to open it up to a multiplicity of interpretations. "A composer writes parts," Cage wrote, "but, leaving their relationship unfixed, he writes no score. Sound sources are at a multiplicity of points in space with respect to the audience so that each listener's experience is his own." Thus, there is no single work, certainly no single experience, and the identity of the piece is constantly in flux: "Where people had felt the necessity to stick sounds together to make a continuity, we ... felt the opposite necessity to get rid of the glue so that sounds would be themselves." (Treib 1996, 175)

and time within the exhibition and allow for multiple interpretations of his work. At his show in the MACM, in the first gallery one enters, *Time After Time*, *Answer Me*, *After Three Minutes* (2007) and *Doldrums* (2008) were presented quasi-simultaneously. *Answer Me* and *Time After Time* were played alternately, both in their entirety; when one ended the other began. The other works, which were affected electronically by the sounds around them, would play continuously, in response to each other and to *Answer Me* and to *Time After Time*. With this presentation strategy, the viewer could wander among the works, watching and listening to more than one work at the same time and experiencing them in a multiplicity of ways. Marie Fraser saw this configuration as an activation of the spectator's role, allowing him or her to synchronise internally the different works like a conductor synchronising the different instruments of an orchestra.

There are many connections between musical partitions and the work of Anri Sala. It is as if the visitor would have to resynchronise it. If each video work were a musical instrument or a part of the partition, it is as if the spectator was in the position of the orchestra conductor and had to synchronise or re-synchronise the whole. (Fraser 2015, my translation)

In the Montreal exhibition, Sala juxtaposed the different pieces shown creating a meta oeuvre that the viewer could wander through. Marie Fraser made the analogy of an orchestra when talking about the exhibition. It could also be said that Sala placed and played back his different video works as instruments in a jam session; the images and sounds were perceived by the visitor as being in communication with each other.

The exhibition's setting becomes a place where time and space itself are the object of unprecedented exploration. Unlike those video artists who reproduce the conditions of a cinema screening by isolating their works and presenting them in black boxes, Anri Sala aims to open up the space, so that the works resonate as much with each other as with the venue. (Fraser 2011, 52)

For *Le Clash*, Sala inserted the audio video work into a body of works in the same gallery; *The Long Sorrow* (2005) and *Score* (2011)

shared the space with *Le Clash* and played off it visually and aurally. To permit the viewer to appreciate the musical subtleties and temporal complexities of their soundtracks, *The Long Sorrow* and *Le Clash* were played back one after another. With *Score Sala* attempted to inscribe the resonance of *Le Clash* into the interior membrane of the museum's material structure; he perforated the plasterwork the length of the gallery walls with the score of The Clash's song *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* (1981). *Le Clash* referred to, and used as an acoustic device, a dysfunctional piece of architecture, the *Salle des fêtes* in Bordeaux. The condemning of the pavilion in Bordeaux's Grand Parc erased the space from the acoustic memory of the concerts held there. Closed off, the interior architecture of the *Salle* became an inaccessible acoustic space, still resonating the music and ambience of the concerts held there, but physically severed from any memory of them.

Like *Le Spectrum*, the *Salle des Fêtes* was an element of the music heard there, as an (electro) acoustic space, but also as part of the concert experience. In the same manner the historically remarkable architecture in which I first saw *Answer Me* was an integral part of the work as was (in a subtler way) the institutional architecture of the MACM in my reception of Sala's exhibition in Montreal.

Caisses de résonance

When the Dutch electronics corporation Philips decided to consecrate their pavilion for the 1958 Brussels world exposition to research in electronic art forms, they invited Le Corbusier to design it and to conceive its content. Iannis Xenakis handled much of the design of the pavilion architecture and produced a musical composition for its entrance. Edgar Varèse provided a second musical work for the interior of the pavilion and Le Corbusier himself developed a multi-image slide and light projection to accompany Varèse's composition. As the pavilion for an electronics firm, it was a daring proposition, a precursor to many of the multi-image and multi-channel sound installations produced by film, sound and video artists later in the century. Sala's work installed in the MACM in 2011 is but one echo of this remarkable artistic, scientific and corporate collaboration of over fifty years before.

When the Philips Pavilion was dismantled for good after the end of the world exposition, it signalled the disappearance of the striking architectural form and of the musical experience of Varèse's *Poème électronique*, conceived and composed specifically for the innovative acoustic properties of the pavilion. In his book, *Space calculated in seconds: the Philips Pavilion, Le Corbusier, Edgar Varèse*, about the Philips Pavilion, Marc Treib writes:

The *Poème électronique* is unique in that it was composed for a specific space, and the space was designed acoustically to transfer sound patterns: to truly distribute sound in space. Technically speaking, the *Poème électronique* as organized sound/music was destroyed with the building because the aural experience can never be re-created without the exact configuration of the space that supported it. (Treib 1996, 249)

The *Gesamtkunstwerk* that was the Philips Pavilion points to an articulation of music in a unique space time configuration. The music would be heard in a space acoustically engineered for its reception. It would be accompanied with a play of light and images synchronised with it. It would also be heard for its duration, following an entrance into the acoustic space and preceding a departure from this space out to the exterior surroundings. Varèse's piece was delimited temporally and spatially.⁵³

In an urban setting, the complex play of historical and social forces on the city's architectural fabric inscribe temporalities of memory and forgetting onto its surfaces. A structure can reveal a musical resonance drawn from its past. In the case of Anri Sala's video work, *Le Clash* (2010), the acoustic properties of an abandoned concert hall allow it to reverberate notable moments of its history. In this work we see a man playing a barrel organ beside an empty, brightly painted monolithic modern structure in what looks to be a city park. The tune

⁵³ In the same decade John Cage composed pieces that also recognised the configuration of the space and time when music is heard. In his "silent piece" 4'33" (first performed in 1952) the room noises became the music when the piano was not played. In his subsequent "chance and random" compositions, the location of where the movement is heard determines its sound.

played on the organ, *The Clash's Should I stay or Should I Go?*, echoes the tune emanating from it. To make the video, Sala transformed the abandoned building into a monumental music box, a *caisse de résonance*.

Anri Sala treats the closed and sealed off building as a *caisse de résonance*, as architecture as a musical instrument. He uses the acoustic characteristics of the structure and its setting to create an in situ sound piece. In this manner, the spatial and temporal qualities of the Salle des Fêtes and its surroundings are explored and played with: spatial, as the organ player circles the building and temporal, as, in the video, the building is seen and listened to for the 8 minutes and 31 seconds that the tune is being played.

There is another aspect of the architecture beyond its physical properties that Sala reflects upon in this work. The Salle des Fêtes, a modernist park pavilion served as a concert hall for rock music in the 1980s. This information lends another resonance to the Salle des Fêtes, one of social and cultural significance; beyond having spatiotemporal properties, that Sala plays with musically, the architecture resonates in the collective imagination of the generation of *Bordelais* that grew up frequenting the Salle to listen to music and to socialise.

The abandonment of modern architecture and the shift in its cultural significance is a recurrent subtext of Sala's work. In *Answer Me*, the artist filmed in an abandoned listening station, a geodesic dome on a rubble mountain in Berlin. Interestingly, the first time I saw Anri Sala's work was in Berlin in the abandoned Palast der Republik. An exhibition of contemporary art was held in the gutted former cultural centre and monument to the German Democratic Republic in 2005. One year later, the building had been completely dismantled, a symbol of a repressive regime erased from the German capital's landscape. Coincidentally, the official reason for the razing of the Palast was that it was deemed contaminated due to the asbestos used in its construction.⁵⁴

54 In 2004, Tacita Dean made the film work *Palast* which showed the Palast der Republik in its deteriorated state, already slated for demolition, the marble having been stripped from its façade, its golden window panels framed by a rusted infrastructure. Dean captured the disappearing views of post *Wende* Berlin reflected in the "contentious" (Dean 2011, 70) edifice's tarnished windows, views including that of the *Fernsehturm*. Viewed

Anri Sala carved into the architecture housing the exhibition of *Le Clash*, indirectly addressing the fragile structure of the cultural institution. Sala perforated the interior walls of the gallery where the work was installed with another work, *Score*, a pattern of oblong holes. These holes were direct translations of the holes perforated into the music roll used by the organ player seen in the video. The array of holes was thus the score of the Clash's *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* heard played on a barrel organ and on a music box with the video.⁵⁵ The holes were cut into the plaster board of the gallery walls, exposing at rhythmic intervals the internal structure of the building. They thus also suggested the eventual degradation and structural collapse of the museum. Sala's work, *Le Clash*, about a condemned building presupposes the ultimate destruction of all buildings including the one in which it is shown.⁵⁶

The perforated music roll is at once a recording of a piece of music⁵⁷ and a plan (or a digital programme) for music to be played. It thus proposes both the past and the obsolete (something which has happened) and the future, the potential to hear something for the first time. By transposing this past potentiality onto the walls of the museum, by

in relation to the subject, the panoptical television tower of her earlier "Berlin work", as a viewing apparatus, the Palast de Republik, Dean presents as an opaque reflective box, concealing its interior while mirroring its surroundings.

55 The holes were Sala's third variation on the Clash song. The first being the tune shown being played on the barrel organ as the organ grinder walked around the *Salle* in the video. The second variation was the same tune emanating from the *Salle*, shown in the video and performed live in another declination of the work, *Tease, tease, tease* in collaboration with Olivier Goinard, at the Salle des fêtes in 2009.

56 Marie Fraser explained to me that Sala's original intention was for the holes of the musical score to be punctured all the way through the MACM's walls offering views onto the street outside of the museum, also inscribing the score into the exterior architecture of the museum. Sala's proposal was not possible, as Fraser explained. "At the end of the exhibition, he wanted to deconstruct the wall. He had in mind to scrape into the wall to the point that we would see outside, to create a kind of opening to the exterior world. The exhibition was in the month of February and the MACM is a tenant of the Place des Arts. It was not an easy situation and was quickly dropped as it was unfeasible. But he was able to do it later when he exhibited *Le Clash* at the Serpentine Gallery in London. He pierced holes in the entrance wall and did the same at the Galerie Chantal Crousel when he presented the work there." (Fraser 2015, my translation)

57 The music roll is a very early media for recording as well as for playback. Before the commercialisation of recorded music on gramophone discs, copies of player piano rolls "recorded" by well-known musicians were sold allowing the owners to hear again the performance of the musician on the player pianos in their homes.

commencing the destruction of the edifice, Sala at once suggests the museum's eventual obsolescence and proposes a new use for its building, like the *Salle des Fêtes* transformed into a *caisse de résonance*,⁵⁸ he would transform the closed architectural form of the museum into a porous structure that opens itself up to its exterior surroundings.

When Anri Sala perforated the holes of the music box rolls into the plaster of the MACM's walls it made reference to the condemned *Salle des Fêtes*, drilling into the walls to determine the presence of asbestos. It was also an attempt to inscribe musicality into the architecture of the museum. The musicality performed by Anri Sala is not without a score (we have the script of Antonioni's film, a Clash song, a lost soundtrack) but that score is always replayed and remixed as an improvisation with the space in which it is heard. Improvisation is, at times, a constructive form of putting together incongruous or dissonant elements to produce a harmonic whole. It is also a taking apart of musical structure to reconfigure it anew, of destroying the implicit hierarchy of musical composition. By beginning to take apart the museum, and by improvising with its architectonics, Sala's work could be seen to propose a reconfiguration of the implicit socio cultural positioning of the institution, from one prescribing cultural (and social) values to one that is porous, opening up to a larger field of practices and operating in a form of open ended improvisation eschewing institutionalised hierarchies of "high culture."⁵⁹ *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* is no longer a question asked by a jilted lover, but rather an indication of the lack of orientation that the music now has, reiterated by Sala as he questions the

58 Marie Fraser explains the complexity of the apparatus used in the making of *Le Clash* and explains how the abandoned concert hall was reconfigured by Sala for the video. "During the film's shooting and during the performance by Anri Sala that took place in 2009 at the *Salle des Fêtes* site (*Tease, tease, tease*, in collaboration with Olivier Goinard), wireless microphones were installed inside the organ, and the sound signals were captured by receivers and broadcast through speakers inside the building. The former concert hall was actually used as a giant resonance box that operated stereophonically with the live performance." (Fraser 2011, 57)

59 I do not claim that Anri Sala was aware of the institutional specificities of the MACM nor of the politics of the programme of urban reconfiguration operating outside of it. Of course, Sala, embedded as a consenting player in a very hierarchical market driven art-world economy, is poorly placed to effect a reconfiguration of the status quo. But perhaps, because he comes from a place that saw a radical upheaval in social hierarchy, he possesses a sensitivity to social and cultural difference and his work is able to point to possibilities for ruptures in another hierarchy.

sustainability and relevance of both the architecture depicted in (the *Salle des fêtes*) and the architecture (the museum) housing his work.

Cité du havre

Until 1992, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal was situated in the Cité du havre, an urban planning attempt from the 1960s aimed at revitalising a disused section of the city's maritime port and reusing the abandoned pavilions of Expo 67.⁶⁰ The museum occupied the art gallery from Montreal's world exposition and was situated on a strip of land between the port's Bickerdyke Basin and the Saint Lawrence River not far from Moshe Safdie's landmark Habitat 67 housing project. The location was an inspiring one, with views of the river and the city skyline from the building's upper floor, but it also impeded prospective visitors from making the trip to the museum; poorly served by public transit and a long hike through a gritty container port, the MACM was cut off from the city's centre and the many cultural activities taking place there.⁶¹

The MACM moved with great promise in 1992 to its current location in the downtown Place des Arts complex. The promise was fulfilled as the new location and aggressive public relations have made the MACM into a very popular museum with both locals and tourists. The memory of its former location, the aesthetics of abandonment and failed projects of urban renewal that the earlier incarnation of the MACM was imbued with, would seem to fade at the safe distance it maintains from the pristine edifice in the cultural heart of the city.⁶²

60 The land of the Cité du Havre is the former McKay Pier, an artificial peninsula built to protect the port of Montreal. By the time of Expo 67, maritime activity had been relocated from this pier to a new port in the East of the city. The first residential construction in the Cité du Havre was Habitat 67. While there have since been two other residential complexes built on the peninsula, the site remains mostly empty and cut off by the water and the remains of the port that lie between it and the rest of the city.

61 I remember soon after moving to Montreal making the trip on foot to the MACM in Cité du Havre. My "wayfinding," the experience of circumnavigating the silos and cranes of the container port and passing under the pillars of the raised Autoroute Bonaventure, conditioned greatly my experience and memories of the exhibitions visited there, giving them an otherworldly resonance seemingly existing outside of contemporary society and everyday urban life.

62 The pavilion built for the Art Gallery of Expo 67 and which served as the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from 1968 until 1991 remains standing today. It has served as a warehouse and in other functions since the museum moved over 20 years ago.

The unfulfilled regeneration of the freight port of the Cité du Havre, former home of the MACM, has been mostly forgotten, superseded by more recent attempts at urban renewal in Montreal including the Quartier des spectacles that encompasses the MACM in its current location. We could look to this earlier incarnation of Montreal's contemporary art museum and its incongruous setting as an antecedent for the future potential of the MACM building, as a yet to be abandoned architectural project. The installation of Sala's work *Le Clash*, adapted to the current iteration of the museum's architecture,⁶³ the perforated walls staging an attempt by an engineer to discover flaws in the building's structure, would seem to invoke a narrative that leads to the structure's dismantling.

The memory of the pavilion housing Galerie Johnen in Berlin presupposed also my experience of Sala's work in the MACM. I remembered the redundancy of the pavilion⁶⁴ playing into my experience of Sala's work shown there. *Answer Me* used the echo of the empty space of the listening station to enhance the music of the drumming in its production, but the empty (unused) space of the pavilion it was shown in amplified the resonant drumming and the emptiness of the space. The presence of abandonment was doubly played in this iteration of the work. In Montreal, the shifting fate of the urban landscapes surrounding the two iterations of the MACM played into my experience of the exhibition and its reminders (*Le Clash*, *Answer Me*) of the fragility of the relevance and the contested use value of shared urban space.

The experience of Sala's exhibition in Montreal was, for many of its visitors, isolated from the disruptions of the external remodelling of public space. Many of them would have arrived to the museum by subway and would not have passed through the construction site

surrounding the museum. Many of them also would not contextualise the "aesthetic experience" in the museum through its urban setting. My experience was different; the effect of the mostly ephemeral time-based works projected in the museum's galleries was subsumed by what I felt to be a very material and instrumental destruction of a cityscape that embodied personal and collective memories. The exhibition of Anri Sala's work was what drew me to the museum. I appreciated what I saw inside, but left confused and traumatised by what I experienced outside the museum's walls.

63 Anri Sala is explicit in his desire to have his work adapted to the space in which it is shown and for the work to alter the reception of the space. "I like to think about a work connects to the space each time, and I want it to be as different as it can be. There is a point where you do not use the space just to show your work, but you use your work to release the space." ("Hans Ulrich Obrist in conversation with Anri Sala," in Anri Sala, London and New York: Phaidon, 2006, 27 as quoted by Fraser 2011, 52)

64 I returned to see the pavilion in the fall of 2015. It was still there. The trees around seemed to have grown bigger, the landscaping somewhat unkempt. The structure was still being used, one side as a workshop of sorts and the other as storage. Its function within the community would seem to have remained marginal.







Chapter three
ABANDONED PAVILIONS

The little foreigner⁶⁵

Several years ago I was given some old editions of Athens newspapers found in the house of a Greek immigrant in Montreal. Always fascinated by old newspapers, I hung on to these for a while before going through them, trying to make out the stories being reported in 1974. The scarred face of the man looking at the camera in the photo at the bottom of the front page of one of the editions caught my eye. I soon recognised him as Iannis Xenakis, the avant-garde Greek composer and architect, one-time collaborator of Le Corbusier.

With some help, I was able to make out most of the article. It recounted Xenakis's return to Greece in 1974 after 27 years in exile. Having fought alongside leftist partisans in Greece in the battles for that country's liberation from Italian, German and British occupation in the 1940s, he was sentenced to death by the Greek government in 1947 for his communist affiliations. Xenakis fled to Paris where he studied to become first an architect and then a composer. He was pardoned when the military junta governing Greece was removed from power in 1974, enabling his historic return to his homeland reported in the newspaper article.

Xenakis's exile would seem to have informed his approach to both architecture and to musical composition. His experiments working with Le Corbusier, with reinforced cast concrete, *béton brut*, proved it to be a building material that offered new possibilities for architectural forms. Concrete also had physical characteristics, colour and texture, that did not fit with any traditional architectural vernacular. In this sense, the material itself is not emblematic of a particular geography or "homeland" the way traditional building materials of stone, wood and clay can be. Likewise, the geometrically complex, mathematically calculated designs of Xenakis went beyond the forms associated with the classical and the vernacular.

Xenakis composed music using parabolic equations to determine the tone, pitch and rhythm of the compositions. The works referred to natural phenomena and to perception and consciousness, but were abstract forms, removed from popular and classical structures

⁶⁵ Iannis Xenakis's family name is the diminutive ("little") form of the Greek ξένος, meaning "stranger" or "foreigner."

of musical composition. Xenakis wrote music, which, like him, was removed from traditional roots. It floated above the territories of national and local culture in the modernist cloud of the late avant-garde. Ivan Hewett in his essay on Xenakis, "A Music Beyond Time," referred to Xenakis's unorthodox musical influences, from the Greek theorist Aristoxenus and Byzantine chants to folk music and Bach. "What these musics have in common is that they can be conceived - by someone with a determined bent for timeless verities - as freed from the taint of "culture," and therefore invulnerable to time's corrosive effects." (Hewett 2010, 23)

A pavilion

For the world exposition in Brussels in 1958, working for Le Corbusier's architectural firm, Xenakis designed the Philips Pavilion, a unique hyperbolic paraboloid structure built in concrete that was, according to the architect-composer, entirely based on its acoustic properties.⁶⁶ Le Corbusier was commissioned by the Dutch electronics company to design the pavilion's structure and to develop the contents of an electronic audio-visual programme for its interior. Focussing on the visual programme *Le poème électronique* (the music being composed by Edgard Varèse) for the building's interior, Le Corbusier consigned the architectural design of the pavilion to Xenakis. Taking into consideration the building's acoustic properties, Xenakis created a tent-like structure with curved reinforced concrete

⁶⁶ Hyperbolic paraboloids were used in other pavilions at Expo 58, but none of these made use of the parabolic form in such a pronounced way as did Xenakis with the Philips Pavilion. Influenced by the Futurists' abilities to infuse movement into the otherwise static mediums of painting and sculpture and by the dynamic constructions of artists such as Naum Gabo, post-war architects looked to Hyperbolic paraboloids as a means to infuse movement into an otherwise static structure. Marc Treib, in *Space calculated in seconds: the Philips Pavilion, Le Corbusier, Edgard Varèse*, writes: "Space-time had been a critical ingredient in the formulation of modern architecture; the hyperbolic paraboloid thus suggested a means to overcome the limitations imposed on flowing spaces by the orthogonality of the box. As the viewer moves around the hyperbolic paraboloid surfaces of a Gabo work, the sculpture appears to regenerate its form in continual movement before the eyes." (Treib 1996, 33) Xenakis used the hyperbolic paraboloid for its acoustic properties, but the form also allowed for a temporal reading of an architecture that appeared to unfold as the visitor walked around it.

walls determined by parabolic formulae to better resonate the sound waves within its interior.

The project was to mark the end of Le Corbusier's and Xenakis's association and the Philips Pavilion was the last public building Xenakis was to work on. Concentrating on his interest in combining music with mathematical principles, he went on to become an influential and innovative composer of electronic music. The few architectural projects that Xenakis worked on with Le Corbusier highlight his success at incorporating abstract mathematical formulae into the spatial and material reality of architecture.⁶⁷ The formulae, derived in part from parabolic equations and the golden ratio, served as the basis for many of Xenakis's musical compositions. They prefigure a temporal dimension to the structures they result in. In practice, the buildings play themselves out temporally. In the Philips Pavilion, the curved surfaces of the structure's interior served to accentuate the musical compositions (by Xenakis as well as by Varèse) that lead the visitor through it and accompany Le Corbusier's visual programme of projected shapes and images.

The Philips Pavilion was a remarkably successful outcome of a post-war collaboration between artists (Le Corbusier, Xenakis, Varèse) and a large corporation (Philips Electronics).⁶⁸ Rumour suggests that Philips

⁶⁷ Another important contribution Xenakis made on one of Le Corbusier's projects was at the Couvent Sainte-Marie de la Tourette, completed in 1960 in L'Éveux, France. Xenakis worked on the fenestration of the friary's corridors and refectory. He applied his knowledge of musical composition, using parabolic equations to determine the varying distances among the vertical windows and the ribs between them. Marc Treib writes of this early collaboration between Le Corbusier and his former protégé. "In 1956, Le Corbusier had invited Xenakis to work on the monastery of La Tourette, applying the Modulor proportional system to plan the "musical" spacing of the glass and mullions of the expanses of windows that face the fields. The transition to a project rooted in geometry and music was natural. (see Matossian, Xenakis, 65-73.)" (Treib 1996, 15) The complex system of undulating window panes with their irregularly spaced mullions and transoms is experienced as a visual musical score that unfolds as one walks through the spaces it surrounds. Xenakis, along with Le Corbusier, precisely calculated the geographical setting of the friary in relation to the sun's changing path of ascendance and decline so as to emphasise the experience of changing diurnal rhythms of light and shadow within the complex. The musical temporality of the Couvent La Tourette plays out to a religious order sensitive to the sun's shifting itinerary in the tranquillity of a bucolic rural setting.

⁶⁸ The design of the pavilion was originally credited uniquely to Le Corbusier, as the head of the architectural firm that was contracted to produce it. Xenakis contested the omission of his name from the architectural contact and was finally awarded credit for his important contribution to the pavilion's design. This led to his leaving Le Corbusier's

resorted to hiring artists to provide the content and form of the pavilion as the company which was still retooling after the Second World War, had not been able to develop new products in time to display them in their pavilion.⁶⁹ One of the technologies Philips was working on was colour television. Their research was not advanced enough to exhibit, while RCA, an American company less affected by the war, was able to show their developments in this field.⁷⁰

While one company (RCA) was showing a major technical innovation in moving image presentation and distribution, another was letting artists experiment with and expand upon existing (moving) image and sound reproduction and presentation technology; the exhibition in the Philips Pavilion had a multi-channel pre-recorded musical score

firm and to eventually foregoing architecture for the career in musical composition that brought him his great recognition. Marc Treib explains the situation that Xenakis faced and his response to it: "... the contract establishes a firm name, and it is usually the firm that is legally regarded as the author. Whether this is equitable is hardly the question; it was (and to some degree remains) normal practice. But to Xenakis, who had been intimately involved with the design and production of the building from its inception, and to whom the majority of the credit for its design could be justifiably assigned, the omission of his name came as a slight." (Treib 1996, 85)

69 Philips late entry into the colour television market in the 1950s seems to have been indicative of the Dutch company's tendency to develop technologies at a different pace than its competitors. Eric Kluitenberg remarks on the more recent history of failed innovation at Philips, including the interactive CD-i CD-ROM player and the Video 2000 home video recorder, both systems that were superseded by other technologies before they had a chance to attain commercial success. "Phillips (sic, my note), the consumer electronic manufacturer, has produced several famous examples of prematurely deceased media, such as the CD-i player, an interactive CD-ROM player that displayed interactively navigable contents on a regular TV screen. The CD-i, which was heralded as a platform for interactive home entertainment as well as a scientific and educational instrument, proved not to be a profitable business proposal. The Video 2000 system of Phillips is another famous case in point – technologically superior to the VHS system, it seemed predestined to become an international standard for recorded home entertainment but failed for lack of cross-producer support and consumer interest." (Kluitenberg 2011, 64)

70 Marc Treib attempts to corroborate these rumours by looking at the minutes from an exhibition group meeting in January 1956 where, "...at least one committee member was convinced that the American pavilion ... would feature a color television, rumored to be near or in production at IBM." Louis C. Kalff, the Philips director responsible for the pavilion proposed a daring alternative to the company's dilemma of displaying not quite cutting edge electronic goods. "Instead, an international team comprising an artist, an architect, and a composer would create a pavilion utilizing electronic technology in the service of the arts-presenting Philips as a progressive, benevolent multinational corporation." (Treib 1996, 11)

played back over more than 300 speakers.⁷¹ The multi-screen projection programme was conceived and designed by Le Corbusier for eight film projectors, four lantern projectors and a complex array of spotlights and fluorescent fixtures.⁷² Xenakis composed the music to accompany the visitors as they passed through the antechamber leading to the main hall of the pavilion where the sound, light and projection environment was performed.

Despite the avant-garde genealogy of its contributors and their unorthodox approach to architecture, image and music, the pavilion was a very popular attraction at the Brussels world exposition; many of its visitors, perhaps looking to satisfy their curiosity, were drawn in by the building's striking, unconventional form. Sharan Kanach, referring to data from *The Philips Technical Review*⁷³ wrote: "Philips estimated that approximately 1,500,000 spectators experienced the *Poème électronique* in the space of a few months!" (Kanach 2008, 103)

The passing into history of the pavilion and the subsequent, over the years, collective forgetting of a once significant object of public

71 Treib attempts a calculation of the amount of speakers used in the pavilion coming up with the number of 325. "Speakers would be positioned on a conceptual grid of 2 meters square, with additional units at the summits of the shells. Given that the area of the shell surface was calculated at 2,100 square meters, they would theoretically need 500 speakers to carry the sound. In reality, they adjusted the number to around 300 - there were no exact counts made, and the estimates vary wildly, from 150 to 450, depending on the source. The most accurate estimate seems to be 325." (Treib 1996, 49)

72 Treib also lists all of the projection and lighting equipment used in the Philips Pavilion. "The list of equipment finally used included four cinema projectors, two for the film and two for the tri-trous. Mirrors directed the light beams of the tri-trous to their desired destinations. Four projection lanterns, with rotating disks equipped with colored filters activated by servomotors, paired with fluorescent lights, created the ambiances. An additional two projectors contributed the cloud effects, and a final pair projected the sun and moon. Six more spotlights-near the peaks of the structure-added to the colored ambiances, as directed light sources. Four lightbulbs fluoresced the volumes of the mathematical object and the female figure suspended from the peaks. Fifty "stars" were scattered over the upper limits of the space, and by switching them on and off, a twinkling effect resulted. In addition to these projectors and lights, forty groups of five fluorescent lamps in white, red, yellow, green, and blue, mounted behind the barrier, could be regulated to create the illusion of a bright horizon sunrise. All the controls for the lamps, like the sound system, were coded onto magnetic tape. In addition to the aesthetic lighting, emergency illumination and secluded bluish white fluorescents were mounted on the underside of the barrier wall to demark the limits of the space and to aid the visitors in entering and exiting." (Treib 1996, 158)

73 *The Philips Technical Review*, vol. 20 n° 1, Eindhoven, 1958/59, 54.

fascination and cultural affect, intrigued me and I decided to see if it was possible to find any remnants of the project. In the late spring of 2010, I visited the Parc de Laeken in the north of the Belgian capital. This was part of the grounds of the Brussels 1958 world exposition and where the Philips Pavilion had been located. I knew that it had been dismantled soon after its closing at the end of 1958.⁷⁴ I wondered if there were any traces of the historic structure left to be found. With the help of online maps and an old brochure from Brussels 58, I was able to locate quite precisely where the pavilion might have stood. The setting was a feral wood between the parkland and a parking lot.⁷⁵ This forested wasteland was the antithesis of the manicured lawns and landscaped setting of the pavilions of the 1958 world's fair. I found what may have been the last ruins of the pavilion; worn concrete abutments exposing their hacked off, rusted steel entrails broke through the forest floor. I took photographs from four sides of the rectangle traced from each of the anchor points of the ruined foundation, documenting a search for traces of an architecture and a project that were created in a rare moment of innocent hope and creativity for art, industry and design.⁷⁶

74 The Philips Pavilion was never planned as a permanent structure and the materials used could not endure the damp and cold of the Brussels winter. Marc Treib writes of the circumstances leading to the pavilion's demolition: "At the close of the fair in October 1958, as the pavilion was about to come down, some limited efforts were made to maintain the pavilion for electronic works by other composers. Given the amount of technical equipment and the unusual configuration of the structure, the architecture was essentially a sounding room. It is such an obvious idea, that one wonders why it hadn't been thought of earlier. Some proposals were made to preserve the building, but it was equipped neither for weathering nor for the Belgian winters. The pavilion had been constructed without insulation and its multitude of wires were designed to endure for only a short time. Retaining the pavilion proved to be impossible. The building was to pass, and with it the true setting for the Varèse *Poème électronique*." (Treib 1996, 211)

75 Consulting Google Maps in 2014, I found an indication for the Philips Pavilion that wasn't online when I consulted the service during my visit to Brussels in 2010. The indication was a simple line of text and pointed to a location not far from the spot I had explored and documented in 2010.

76 Treib makes the observation that with the demolition of the Philips Pavilion not only is the architectural project, in its finished, full scale, incarnation lost to us as a spatiotemporal experience, but also the music in its spatiality and particular acoustics gone. "Like the building, the music is gone. There are spectrographs and there are recordings and reconstructed recordings, just as there are photographs of the building. But the experience of the music, like that of a performer deceased, can be only suggested and not re-created. There are some sketches, but there is no written score—one of the reasons that the work possesses an obscure fame. Like the building, the full experience of the music can be described as demolished." (Treib 1996, 211)

Marc Treib recounts the sad resignation felt by Louis Kalff, the Artistic Director at Philips, as the decision is made not to salvage the pavilion. Treib quotes Kalff, who wrote in 1958: "It is a task which makes us a bit sad; nevertheless, it is necessary since the avant-garde creations at the exposition are only remarkable for a very short time. Already, to see again the few pavilions remaining on the site of the exposition gives us very little pleasure." (Treib 1996, 228) Treib follows Kalff's lament with this simple epitaph for the structure. "At 2:00 P.M., 30 January 1959, the pavilion for the Philips corporation was reduced to rubble." (Treib 1996, 228) The disappearance of the Philips Pavilion with no visible trace left of its architecture is an ironic legacy to the man originally responsible for its design. Le Corbusier was only interested in the electronic audio-visual experience of the structure's interior; he believed that the pavilion's exterior was of no importance.⁷⁷

The disappearance of the Philips Pavilion and the subsequent forgetting about it are, for me, as important as its original conception and realisation are. The pavilion's fate follows the narrative of the post-war dismantlement of, and amnesia surrounding, much architecture of moving image presentation, from opulent cinemas to theme park attractions. While the memory of the pavilion has a place today in a history of modern architecture and modern media art, its removal at the end of the world exposition and the banishment of its memory to the dying archives of libraries and museums would seem to coincide with the exile of one of its creators. Iannis Xenakis was banished from his homeland. His contributions to the language of musical composition and architecture went unacknowledged (by the authorities) for many years in Greece. It was only after his pardon and reinstatement as a Greek citizen, that his reputation was officially recognised and heralded by his country.

The Philips Pavilion also marked the end of Xenakis's brief but influential career as an architect and, it seems, was the catalyst for him to pursue his practice as a composer. Marc Treib writes: "It is interesting to note that shortly after the completion of the building, Xenakis was

77 Marc Treib writes: "... Le Corbusier was against giving any real shape to the exterior: the 'building' would constitute only an 'interior' in which to present the electronic spectacle." (Treib 1996, 14)

to leave architecture and devote himself almost exclusively to musical composition." (Treib 1996, 235). *Concret Ph*, the piece Xenakis composed as an "interlude" for the pavilion remains one of his most listened to recordings and became a key reference in the development of electro-acoustic music in the decades following its first presentation.

The legacy of the Philips Pavilion as architecture reaches less of a critical consensus, than do the lifetime contributions of its three collaborators: Le Corbusier, Varèse and Xenakis. Marc Treib, who places the pavilion (as architecture) solely into the oeuvre of Le Corbusier, (and not of Xenakis), sees it as a minor building in the master's repertoire and attributes its disappearance from architectural history to its marginal importance. "Finally, it must also be suggested that the Philips Pavilion may have drifted into oblivion because, like a minor opus by a major composer, it just wasn't a great building." Treib goes on to say that the pavilion "...lacked the purely expressive poetry of the 1955 chapel at *Ronchamp*, with which it was frequently compared by critics reviewing the fair and its architecture." (Treib 1996, 240)

Since Marc Treib published his book in 1996 (and perhaps partially due to its publication) renewed interest in the Philip's pavilion has appeared in media art, architecture and music circles.⁷⁸ I would contend that it was the pavilion's "minor" status that Treib attributed to it that has recently attracted so many artists and thinkers to it. The structure's status outside of architecture history (its exterior shell was the work of a composer), its existing outside the territory of the modernist architectural canon, show it to be a rupture in the accepted history of modernism, a rupture that opened up the possibility for architectural interventions in moving image and sound production that became the expanded cinema, electro acoustic, and video installation projects of the decades that followed Brussels 58.

⁷⁸ I was made aware of the audio-visual innovation of the *Poème électronique* at the exhibition of *Edgard Varèse – Komponist, Klangforscher, Visionär* at the *Museum Tinguely* in Basle, Switzerland in 2006. The audio-visual programme of the Philips Pavilion was reconstructed for the exhibition in the museum.

Many sites

Xenakis became an influential reference for projects of intervention of music and light into architecture, notably for his "polytope" (Greek for "many sites") installations conceived for Persepolis in Iran, Mycenae in his Greek homeland, Cluny in France and the French pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal. Xenakis's participation in that world exposition was part of its legacy as an unprecedented forum for innovation in moving image and sound architectures.

While some of the pavilions at Expo 67 were exploring innovative ways of projecting film,⁷⁹ others, like with Xenakis's polytope in the French pavilion, proposed immersive sound and light experiences, building on the interior acoustic and lighting strategies used in the Philips Pavilion. Xenakis's *Polytope de Montréal* (1967) was an installation of music and light in which the structure, arrangement and the timing of the lights would correspond to the mathematical formulae used in the musical composition.⁸⁰ For Xenakis, the "polytope" was "music to be seen," a way of extending his music into the visual, spatial and sensorial realms of perception.

Ultimately music had to go beyond sound itself, to incorporate light and ceremony and text in grand spectacles where

⁷⁹ Judith Shatnoff's article "Expo 67: A Multiple Vision" in *Film Quarterly* from 1967 gives a contemporary overview and analysis of several of the pavilions and the cinematic apparatuses found in them. The pavilions included: The Telephone pavilion featuring a 360-degree cinema, the National Film Board's Labyrinth pavilion featuring a series of rooms each using a different large format projection and the Ontario pavilion featured a large screen made of multiple projections. Recent appreciations of the moving image experiments at Expo 67 are to be found in *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67* edited by Monika Kin Gagnon and Janine Marchessault.

⁸⁰ Carey Lovelace describes the complex workings of this sound and light installation, explaining how Xenakis saw it necessary to develop a visual aspect to his musical composition that respected its mathematical and abstract characteristics. Xenakis was, it seems, not satisfied with Le Corbusier's use of connoted imagery in the projections of his *Poème électronique* for the Philips Pavilion. "For the Montreal project, Xenakis fashioned a sophisticated, Naum Gabo-like arrangement of steel cables that threaded through the interior of the Jean Faugeron-designed building, forming a virtual architecture of intersecting dynamic shafts of conoids and hyperboloids. During the six-minute performance, some 1,200 white and colored flashing lights lying along the cables were programmed to create dazzling patterns that changed every twenty-fifth of a second. Simultaneously, a symphony recorded by four separate "orchestras" of identical instrumentation was transmitted via four sets of loudspeakers, one in each quadrant of the hall. ... The public was free to experience the spectacle from many levels on the six-storey-high building's suspended platforms, linked by stairways." (Lovelace 2010, 63)

each element would be ordered by similar mathematical principles. Thus grand fusion was realized in the so-called “polytopes,” vast outdoor pieces designed for specific spaces such as the ruins of Persepolis in Iran. ... elaborate architectures of sounds and lights, which flash and change color in ever changing patterns.” (Hewett 2010, 32)

The *Polytope de Montréal* endured longer than the brief tenure of the Philips Pavilion, remaining operational in the structure of the French pavilion until the building was renovated in the 1990s. The other media installations housed in the former Expo pavilions were mostly dismantled after the summer of 1967. The pavilions themselves were abandoned over the years and eventually demolished with the exception of the few that were overhauled and have since served as museums, as service areas, and, in the case of the French and Quebec pavilions, as a casino.

Quintet

I visited Expo 67 as a very young child. My memories of it are hazy, taking on the saturated colours and slightly erratic movement of the slide carousels and Super 8 films that reiterated people’s experiences there. I remember brightly coloured geometrical shapes and slowly turning mechanisms that seemingly had no purpose. I have returned to the site frequently since I settled in Montreal in the 1990s. I remember some of the remnants of the abandoned pavilions from before the site was cleaned up of its lingering aura of a future that was never quite upon us: the geodesic husk of the abandoned Biosphere after its Plexiglas shell had caught fire, the cracked overgrown concrete slabs of the Place du Canada amphitheatre.

These images of lingering decay have somehow stayed with me, stirred up when, one evening, bored, I rented an obscure science fiction film by Robert Altman. Set in an eternal winter, most of the action of *Quintet*⁸¹ takes place in a futuristic abandoned city. I had trouble following the film’s somewhat cryptic dialogue and narrative but was

81 Robert Altman, *Quintet*, United States, 1979, 118 min.

drawn to the intriguing décor: dilapidated interiors in brightly coloured aluminium and fibreglass, muted through the fog of the frozen atmosphere. I knew these places. I also knew the grey half-daylight of the exterior shots. The end credits affirmed my suspicions. Much of the film had been shot on location in the former Expo site in 1979, before the dismantling of most of its remaining pavilions.

The action of *Quintet* takes place in a frozen post-apocalyptic future, possibly during a nuclear winter.⁸² The sets are barren and strewn with redundant technology; a snow-covered landscape is punctuated by derelict modern architecture and frozen machinery. *Quintet* was shot in Canada, in what is now the territory of Nunavut and on Île Notre-Dame and Île Sainte-Hélène in Montreal in the remains of the pavilions of the world exposition.⁸³ Altman uses the (nuclear) winter setting of *Quintet*, the expanses of white snow, the ice-encased structures and the fogginess produced by condensation in the cold to construct a diegesis that exists beyond our understanding of time and space. In an interview in *Fantastic Films*, Altman claims he uses the winter setting as a cinematic device to disorient the viewer, “... to orient you to the disorientation.” (Altman 1979, 28)

It is never revealed in the script or in the location and sets, the where and the when of the film’s diegesis. No places are named; Essex, the protagonist played by Paul Newman, speaks in the beginning of the film of the city he remembers without naming it or placing it in an identifiable history. Due in part to the snow and icescape effacing details of the land, the winter setting of *Quintet* exists outside of place.

82 The permanent winter setting of *Quintet* is one that was explored by many filmmakers in the time before glasnost when the threat of nuclear war was very present in the collective imagination. A study published in the *Journal of Geophysical Research* in 2007 maintains that the negative effects of a nuclear winter would be catastrophic. “A global average surface cooling of -7°C to -8°C persists for years, and after a decade the cooling is still -4°C . Considering that the global average cooling at the depth of the last ice age 18,000 years ago was about -5°C , this would be a climate change unprecedented in speed and amplitude in the history of the human race.” (Robock, Oman and Stenchikov 2007)

83 The location for much of the film was the former Man the Explorer pavilion, demolished in 1986. For an analysis of the Expo 67 locations used by Altman in the filming of *Quintet* refer to Steve Lyons’s comprehensive article from 2009: Steve Lyons, “Memory of a Post-Apocalyptic Future. Whitening Skeletons and Frozen Time in Robert Altman’s *Quintet* and Expo 67’s Man the Explorer Pavilion.” (http://cityaspalimpsest.concordia.ca/palimpsest_ll_en/papers/Steve_Lyons.pdf)

Eternal north

In his recent book, *The Idea of North*, Peter Davidson writes of the north as the end of our geographical imagination. "Direction is suspended at the North and South Poles; they are places outside place." (Davidson 2005,¹³) The eternal north of *Quintet* exists beyond place. It also exists outside of time. Nuclear winter results in a north beyond our temporal imagination. The action of *Quintet* seems to take place in the future, but it is hard to determine how many years into the future. Again it is the winter landscape that obfuscates our understanding of the time period. The film opens with a long travelling shot showing a train frozen in the snow.⁸⁴ The aforementioned scenes indicate a time after an environmental catastrophe has left the world as a frozen wasteland. Davidson writes that since Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated polar expedition, "...there is a presupposition attending ideas of north of disaster, loss, expeditions that fail to return." (Davidson 2005,¹⁶) The image of Scott's failed expedition to the South Pole is recalled in the first scene of *Quintet* as two figures are shown struggling to make their way through a harsh frozen landscape reminiscent of cinematic depictions of Antarctica.

The first scenes of *Quintet* are those filmed in Nunavut. (The train was a model used in a composite shot). In these, the vastness of the arctic terrain stands for the barren frozen landscape of the future. Essex and Vivia, his companion played by Brigitte Fossey, are heading towards his native city. Most of the action of the film takes place in the ruins of this city. The architecture and layout as well as the way in which Essex describes it to Vivia suggest a technologically advanced city, a

84 The image of the abandoned train could also be read as a cipher for the dismantling of the Expo site. In the summer of 1967, a monorail, a light rail system and a gondola lift transported people around the site and through some of the pavilions (most notably, carrying visitors into the geodesic dome of the United States pavilion). These dynamic transportation devices and their infrastructures were all dismantled in the years following Expo 67, as was the extended escalator in the interior of the United States pavilion. These apparatuses should be considered, along with the film projection architecture and devices, when thinking about the legacy of moving image technology experimented with and subsequently abandoned at the Expo site. The experiences of the visitors travelling on these contrivances were seen through a sequence of overhead and tracking shots, that dissolved into the innovative film projections shown in many of the pavilions.

metropolis of 5 million divided into 5 sectors and 25 levels.⁸⁵ After the expanses of the first scenes, the action is confined to the claustrophobic city complex and mostly to interiors. While the architecture and design of the city are modern, the economy and society would seem to have regressed to medieval models.

In the film's diegesis, "quintet" is a participation game popular before disaster struck the world. It is still played and it consumes most of the inhabitants' time in the city. There is nothing else for them to do but to wait to die from starvation or from the cold. When, at the end of the film, Essex discovers that the rules of the game have changed and that the goal is to kill off one's opponents, he decides to leave the city, alone. The film ends in the same landscape as it began with the solitary Essex walking into whiteness of the snow.

In this last scene, Altman employs a type of shot that uses the light and atmospheric conditions of the northern landscape to play with our perception and disorient us. This blurring of perception is something that Altman was interested in, in shooting in the cold. He said in the 1979 interview:

I was trying to never show the audience the perimeter of the film. Keep you in a kind of interior claustrophobia. A residual effect we got out of it was that we found we could make people appear and disappear right in front of your eyes. I mean they don't leave the hard sharp frame when they walk out. They walk toward the edge and they just disappear. (Altman 1979, 35)

The last shot of the film, which lasts over two minutes, shows Essex disappearing into the landscape. It is impossible to determine at what moment we lose sight of him. Bill Viola produced the experimental video work *Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)*,⁸⁶ in the same

85 Very little details are given in the film about the structure and makeup of the mostly deserted, unnamed city of the future, but the suggestion of a mathematical hierarchy in its composition brings to mind many 20th century projects for technological mega-cities including Xenakis's Cosmic City project of 1963. Carey Lovelace writes of it as, "... his Cosmic City - slender, three-mile-high arching towers piercing through the clouds, accommodating five million inhabitants each." (Lovelace 2010, 81)

86 Bill Viola, *Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)*, United States, 1979, 28 min.

year that *Quintet* was released. Recorded in the summer in the Chott el-Djerid desert in Tunisia as well as in the winter on the Canadian prairies, Viola set out to capture on video the effects of extreme heat and cold on spatial and temporal perception. *Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)* features a now classic scene, similar to the closing shot of *Quintet*. In a blizzard in rural Saskatchewan a solitary figure walks towards the camera; we are not at first aware of the figure's presence, blurred by the cold and snow, and cannot say when we first notice that there is someone walking towards us. In *Images de surface: L'art video reconsideré*, Christine Ross writes of this scene.

As noted by Gene Youngblood, the snow-covered prairies of Saskatchewan are without geographical limits and appear as a depthless space contradicting Renaissance perspective. The eye is confronted with a picture plane lacking any indication of depth or scale. This lack of perspective is caused by the surface of the screen mimicking that of the snow. (Ross 1996, 84, my translation)

The lack of depth of field that the Saskatchewan snowscape presents us with in Viola's video, is, as well as a characteristic quality of the electronic image of video art, an effect the cold and the winter landscape have on our perception. Bill Viola uses this effect to question our spatiotemporal depth awareness in the vast expanses of the prairie landscape.

Robert Altman's play with our perception serves as a narrative device. He creates suspense by leaving the peripheries of the shot vague and unfocused, adding to an uncertainty as to where and when the action in the film is taking place.

Altman describes the suspense created by the opening shot of *Quintet* in the interview in *Fantastic Film*.

When the film opens up, we're above the tree line, with nothing but frozen wasteland, and here is this modern train. You don't really know it's a train until you reach a certain point, but it tells you this is not *Nanook of the North*. But that there's a train, and its obviously been frozen in for God knows how long. And then

you see these people walking. And then we take them into this first shelter. Which again, has a futuristic look to it, so you know that you're in some time. (Altman 1979, 28)

While *Quintet* is not *Nanook of the North*,⁸⁷ The initial shock upon seeing the train frozen in the snowscape is reminiscent of another film with a northern theme from the same year as Robert Flaherty's classic documentary, but made in a different spirit. Buster Keaton's comedy short *The Frozen North*⁸⁸ opens with a shot of a New York subway entrance standing in a snow covered field. Keaton's character first appears coming out of this structure, suggesting he reached the Arctic by subway. The juxtaposition of urban transportation infrastructure with an empty wilderness is used by Altman, not as a surreal gag in the style of Buster Keaton, but to destabilise the viewers' expectations of where the action in his film might be taking place.

Anticipating Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*,⁸⁹ the next scene in *The Frozen North* takes place in a bar where the patrons are playing cards and gambling. Like with *Quintet*, the north of *The Frozen North* is a place where time is occupied by playing games. The characters of the Altman film have nothing left to do but play quintet. The alternative is to wait to eventually die of cold and starvation. Waiting is replaced by playing a game. Altman borrows from a common leitmotif of the frozen north, existing at least since the time of the Yukon Gold Rush, the gambling house.⁹⁰ In the Yukon, gambling served as a dubious method for the unlucky miner to profit from the luck of his fellow prospectors, but it also served to help pass the time in a harsh place and climate. In the relative comfort of the bar or brothel, the gambler was, temporarily, oblivious of the cold and darkness outside. Caught up with the strategy and unfolding of the game, the obsessive gambler knows neither night nor day, summer nor winter, occupying a temporal dimension that exists beyond the hours of the clock and

87 Robert J. Flaherty, *Nanook of the North*, United States, 1922, 79 min.

88 Edward F. Cline and Buster Keaton, *The Frozen North*, United States, 1922, 17 min.

89 Charles Chaplin, *The Gold Rush*, United States, 1925, 95 min.

90 Ironically, part of the set of *Quintet*, the former French pavilion of Expo 67 was later transformed into a casino. Open 24 hours, its climate-controlled interior exists outside of seasonal and diurnal time.

the days of the calendar. The dark winter of the Arctic, like the nuclear winter of *Quintet*, is seemingly endless; in the continual darkness, time is not marked by the passing days, but by other, more psychological, conditions.

Darkness

Like gambling, watching a film in the climate-controlled, darkened cinema, also takes us outside of diurnal time, to the time of the diegesis, to a time of memories and dreams. Ivan Chtcheglov, writing in 1953, commented on the effects technological developments were having on urban living in post-war Europe:

Darkness and obscurity are banished by artificial lighting, and the seasons by air conditioning. Night and summer are losing their charm and dawn is disappearing. The urban population think they have escaped from cosmic reality, but there is no corresponding expansion of their dream life. The reason is clear: dreams spring from reality and are realized in it. (Chtcheglov 1953)

The development of electric lighting (and less directly of central heating and air conditioning) corresponds with the development of moving image presentation and the particular interior architecture of the cinema, darkened to obscurity and climate controlled. The American artist Robert Smithson, in "A Cinematic Atopia," an essay written for *Artforum* in 1971, posits the cinema as a space of corporeal inertia and of apathy, one in which the spectator succumbs to entropy and reverts to a near catatonic state. "Going to the cinema results in an immobilization of the body." (Smithson 1996, 138) Roland Barthes sees the cinema as a psychological space where we encounter our unconscious selves. In his 1975 essay, "*En sortant du cinéma*,"⁹¹ Barthes remarks on the shock one feels when leaving the cinema and returning abruptly to the time and space of the exterior world. The immersive cinematic experience has changed much since the release of *Quintet*

⁹¹ Roland Barthes, "*En sortant du cinéma*," *Communications*, no 23, 1975, 104-107.

and since Barthes and Smithson were writing. Technological, commercial and social developments have made going to the cinema a less common activity in many communities.⁹² Disorientating immersion occurs elsewhere, in the mediatised home theatre perhaps, but certainly often in museums and galleries showing contemporary moving image based art practices. Claire Bishop refers to both the Barthes article and Smithson's text on cinema, when she writes of the immersive qualities of much video installation art.

Since he accounts for our experience of cinema in spatial (rather than simply psychological) terms, Barthes's essay permits a consideration of video installation as a practice distinct from cinema. His starting point is an evocative description of how we leave cinemas: in a slight daze, with a soft, limp and sleepy body. He thus compares the experience of watching a film to being hypnotised, and the ritual of entering the dimmed space of a cinema as 'pre-hypnotic'. (Bishop 2005, 95)

The ritual of entering a darkened space to partake in a multi-sensorial transcendental experience predates the development of cinematic (and proto-cinematic) technologies and finds many of its roots in religious services and the architectures of places of worship, architectures refined for intense experiences of space, darkness and light in 18th century Europe. The technological predecessor to the immersive, darkened, video installation, the Philips Pavilion was very much, as Marc Treib suggests, a technologically updated apparatus from baroque church interiors.

The Philips Pavilion was an electronic corollary to German baroque creations like Dominikus Zimmermann's church at Wies (c.

⁹² In North America, the closing down of cinemas in downtown districts in the last thirty years curtailed the activity of going to the movies as a popular entertainment form. According to an article in *La Presse+*, twenty-three cinemas and cinema complexes have closed in downtown Montreal since 1985 leaving just five cinemas in operation at the end of 2015. This tendency is paralleled by a decrease in overall movie going attendance as is witnessed by statistics from recent years. The total number of cinema goers in the province of Quebec, which has Montreal as its largest city, dropped from 7.3 million in 2010 to 5.8 million in 2014. (figures from Marc-André Lussier, "*Cinéma en salle: le centre-ville perd l'équilibre*," *La Presse+*, 7 décembre 2015)

1750), where architectural form modulated celestial light to destroy the finite boundaries of perceived space. But it was the darkness, rather than the light, that effaced all sense of perceived limits within; reality was superseded by the virtual images of cinema and the sensual hovering of ambient colored light. (Treib 1996, 243)

The experience of the darkened cinema, as Claire Bishop remarks, permeates many media art installations and exhibitions and has antecedents in religious architecture and ritual. In 1979, just before the commercialisation of the domestic VCR, the norm for watching a film was at a screening in a cinema. A controlled state of darkness outside of daily time would have been the way in which most of Altman's audience would have first experienced *Quintet*. The audience would have presumably experienced the disorientation that Altman intended to produce in them through the diegesis and effects of the film. And they would have experienced a second disorientation in the darkened contained space and time of the architecture of the cinema.

Two islands in a river

The effect of disorientation Altman worked with in *Quintet* was intensified in my first viewing of the film, when, recognising the sets, I could not determine why the decor was familiar to me. This incomprehension was attenuated by the time the credits rolled, but it still piqued my curiosity about the forgotten set of *Quintet*. It led me to the site of Expo 67, on Île Notre-Dame and Île Sainte-Hélène. The disorientation I experienced while watching the film followed me to the two islands in the Saint Lawrence River where I tried to find traces of Altman's film and of Montreal's long ago dismantled world exposition.

The remains of the temporary city that was Expo 67 are barely perceptible. Looking closer, the physical features of Île Notre-Dame, the artificial island built from the earth dug to make the first tunnels of Montreal's subway system, show themselves, the basins, canals and embankments. Some of the roads and footpaths can still be followed. Most of the bridges, which cross the canals, but now lead nowhere, are intact. I made my way through this waning infrastructure, remarking

on the discrepancies of institutional geography that now characterise both of the islands.

A landscape made accessible to the public, a park, a place for recreation, for repose, is under surveillance and subdivided into sections with different levels of accessibility. A section that generates revenue, a casino, is cordoned off, behind parking lots and guard boxes, from casual strollers who might wander into the complex.⁹³ Beyond the defined tourist attractions are landscaped green spaces interspersed with the infrastructure of spectacle (the Formula One track and grandstands), with the architecture of municipal operations, with administrative buildings and sheds and with features that seem redundant and anomalous to the goings on in the park and to the layout of the artificial island, black columns, electrical posts carrying no wires, punctuate the canal banks at regular intervals. It is in this curious geography that the more effaced traces of the Expo site are to be experienced, and where the locations for *Quintet* could somehow be imagined.

Like most inhabitants of Montreal, I have been quite often to Île Notre-Dame and to neighbouring Île Sainte-Hélène, but I am not really familiar with the activities that go on there; the islands are not part of the city that I make use of. Disembarking from the subway in a morning in mid-November at a time of year just before the snow would cover the city, I am surprised by the number of people getting off the train with me. There are a few tourists who head towards a museum and the rest of the people make their way to a bus waiting at the stop across from the station. I quickly understand that their destination is the casino on the other end of the other island. I am left pretty much alone as I make my way across the Cosmos Bridge that straddles the Lemoyne channel leading to Île Notre-Dame. A few city workers, a couple taking photographs, are all the people I see before I approach the former French pavilion from Expo 67. The casino occupies not only this pavilion, but also several outlying buildings including the former Quebec pavilion, forming a concourse surrounded by barriers, parking lots, roads, a basin and canals, and the river. But this is not where I want I go. I am not

⁹³ The regimented division of the islands' geography hints at northern nationalist economic speculation. Ostensibly a sublime landscape offering adventure and tourism, the Canadian North is mapped out with designated restricted areas of mineral extraction, energy production and military occupation.

interested in what has been rebuilt and reconstructed. I am looking for traces, traces of a temporary city, traces of a film set that remembered a city that no longer existed.

Outside of time

Walter Benjamin wrote of 19th century world expositions as places of amusement and spectacle producing an effect of alienation on their visitors. "The entertainment industry facilitates this by elevating people to the level of commodities. They submit to being manipulated while enjoying their alienation from themselves and from others." (Benjamin 1986, 152) Benjamin also recognised in the 19th century industry of spectacle the "ebb" towards outmoded technologies and fashions, a sort of burgeoning archaeology of media. In his essay "Surrealism," Benjamin writes of the surrealist poet André Breton, "He was the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them." (Benjamin 2005, 210)

Like their 19th century predecessors the post-war world expositions were, often, artificial spaces that existed outside of place, heterotopias with their own logic and geography and modes of operation.⁹⁴ But they also existed outside of time.⁹⁵

Expo 67 was open from April 28th until October 29th 1967; it did not operate in the winter. As such, it was not really experienced as taking place in a northern land. The publicity and documentation of the

94 Expo 67 took place in Montreal, a North American city, which had been in the post-war years adapted to automobile transportation. Most people drove to Expo in their cars, but once inside the exhibition ground, they rode a variety of forms of public transport to move from place to place. All of these devices were dismantled and removed from the site once it stopped functioning as an exhibition.

95 Like all of the post war world expositions before it, Expo 67 was not without the ideological posturing of the super powers. Marc Treib recounts the situation in Brussels nine years earlier. "In the American press, the Brussels exposition was seen as nothing less than a cold war competition between the United States and the Soviet bloc." (Treib 1996, 215) In Montreal, the United States pavilion, housed in its geodesic dome, challenged for attention the imposing Soviet pavilion on the other side of the Cosmos Bridge.

exhibition showed sunny scenes and visitors in shirtsleeves; the mild climate enjoyed at Expo 67 was that of anywhere and of nowhere.

If the northern climate was not a significant characteristic of the Montreal world's fair during the summer of 1967, it was a factor in the sustainability of its architecture. Many of the pavilions were kept open until 1981 as part of what was the, intended to be, permanent exhibition, *Man and his World*. As many of these pavilions were built as temporary structures, and not built to withstand the harsh Quebec winter, they were eventually abandoned and demolished.

My interest for Expo 67 is not simply nostalgia for a future in the past, for a time and a place that never really were. Like Expo 58 in Brussels, Montreal's world exposition featured artists' experiments in new forms of immersive image and sound production including Xenakis's *Polytope for Montreal*. These experiments influenced future generations of artists in Quebec and internationally. Montreal media artist and co-founder of the Société des Arts Technologiques Luc Courchesne said in an interview in *La Presse* that his interest in immersive art forms began when he visited Expo 67 as an adolescent.⁹⁶

I visit the island in November, long after the picnickers, the festival-goers and the Formula One fans have left. Remnants of the different recreational facilities, racetrack barriers, fences and park benches, exposed in the brown grass and leafless trees mix with and confuse what might have been the foundations of the pavilions of Expo 67. The geodesic dome of the United States pavilion, the French and Quebec pavilions now incorporated into the Casino complex, as well as a few other recycled pavilions have been restored or renovated. The others were long ago dismantled or left to crumble and removed when the ruins became dangerous. The vast Soviet pavilion was dismantled after the end of the world exposition.⁹⁷ It was said to have been shipped to Moscow to be reassembled in the VDNKh (Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy) park there.⁹⁸

96 Éric Clément, "Luc Courchesne saute dans le vide à Toronto," *La Presse*, 27 janvier 2011, cahier "Affaires".

97 The fate of the Soviet pavilion has recently been researched by Fabien Bellat. His findings were presented in the paper: Fabien Bellat, "Pavillon de l'URSS, Montréal 1967," *Conférences à la Maison de l'Architecture du Québec, Montréal 27 et 28 août 2012*.

98 I visited the VDNKh park in the summer of 2010. I did not see the reconstructed Soviet

An uncertain place

With the foliage gone and before the snow has settled, the short history of the artificial island bares itself to me. The landscaped park gives way to wide expanses of gravel, bleak and empty in the grey half-light of November. In the summer, these parking lots and maintenance yards are background to the natural and recreational attractions of the island. In late autumn, they dominate the landscape like the fields of snow and ice that set the scene in the opening shots of *Quintet*. From the gravelled parking areas narrow roads lead across rusted bridges crossing half drained canals. The Expo site was laid out on islands of reclaimed land surrounded by a network of canals, basins and small lakes. A small-scale cityscape built on water, reminiscent of Venice or Amsterdam, but designed on a modern grid, was conceived.

I find curious metal posts vertically marking the banks of the canals at regular intervals. Possibly posts that carried electrical or telephone lines in the temporary city of Expo 67? I photograph these. Their geometric near perfection (as a series of repeated measured vertical lines), and their blackness stand out against the jumble of grey brown bushes and tree branches that have taken over the once manicured landscape of the site. The remains of the unrestored pavilions, the sets of *Quintet*, have all but vanished. A few blocks of concrete foundations jut out from the earth. The cold and damp of many long winters have eroded the wondrous structures of that imaginary city. I walk, trying to envision the layout of the landmarks, but they remain invisible, lost in the vegetation that has grown over the site. The infrastructure of mass entertainment, the casino complex and the Formula One track make me lose my bearings. Like "the essential Siberia" referred to by Jan Borm in his paper "*Yakutsk, lieu de mémoire sibérien*

pavilion from Montreal. There were other buildings there, built in a similar architectural style and probably built around the same time as the Expo 67 pavilion. These former exhibition halls once displayed the products of the regions and the industries from the republics of the Soviet Union. When I visited them, the ones that were open housed makeshift shops selling handicrafts, souvenirs, and inexpensive clothing and household goods. I did see a building resembling very much the Soviet pavilion when I visited Lithuania in 2012. The abandoned, but still standing, Vilnius Palace of Culture and Sports, built in 1971 on the banks of the Neris River is perhaps what some of the Expo 67 pavilions, including the Soviet pavilion, would have looked like before their demolition.

et européen interculturel,"⁹⁹ that could only exist in the absence of the author, the fantastic, impossible city that was Expo 67 can only exist in its own absence.

If I showed you the city, you would see something that you had never seen before, and you would consequently not believe it. It would look like a model. ... I leave that to your imagination, because if I had shown you what it looked like, the magic would have been gone. (Altman 1979, 28)

The last dialogue from *Quintet*, spoken just before Essex disappears into the snow enunciates the uncertain place that is the diegesis of the film and that is also the ruins of a city that never was.

St. Christopher (played by Vittorio Gassman): Where are you going?

Essex: North

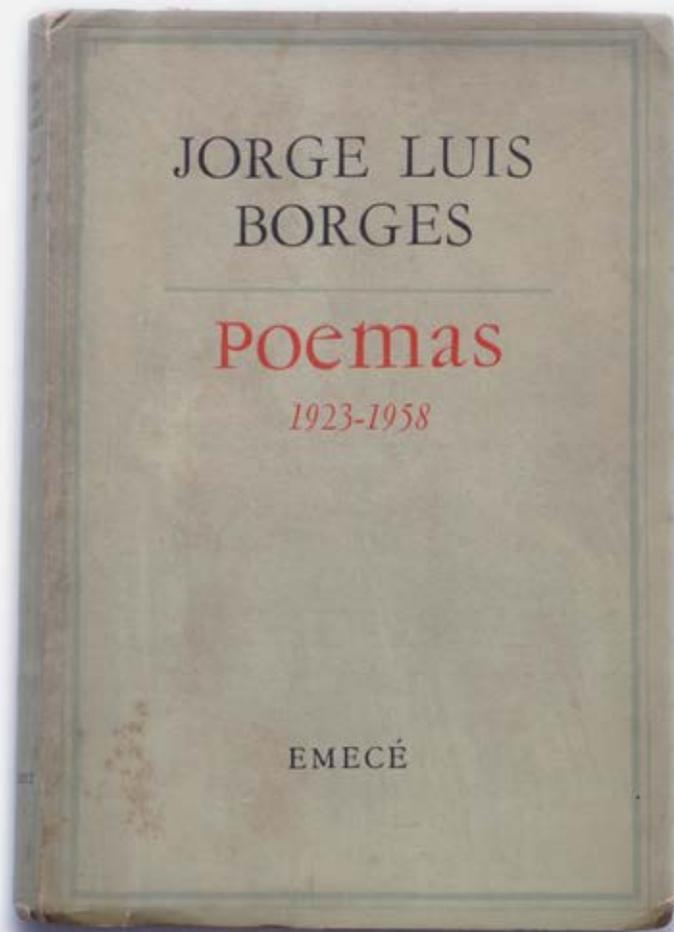
St. Christopher: North? There is nothing there. You won't last a day and a half. You'll freeze to death.

Essex: You may know that. I don't.¹⁰⁰

99 Jan Borm, "*Yakutsk, lieu de mémoire sibérien et européen interculturel*," paper given at the 7th International Multidisciplinary Conference of the International Laboratory for the Comparative Multidisciplinary Study of Representations of the North, Montreal, 2012.

100 Closing dialogue from *Quintet*, Robert Altman, United States, 1979, 118 min.





JORGE LUIS
BORGES

Poemas

1923-1958

EMECÉ

Calle Desconocida
CALLE DESCONOCIDA

UNKNOWN STREET

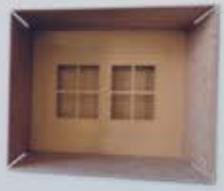
PENUMBRA DE LA paloma Penumbra of the dove cast by the dove
llamaron los hebreos a la iniciación de la tarde
cuando la sombra no entorpece los pasos
y la venida de la noche se advierte
como una música esperada y antigua,
como un grato declive.

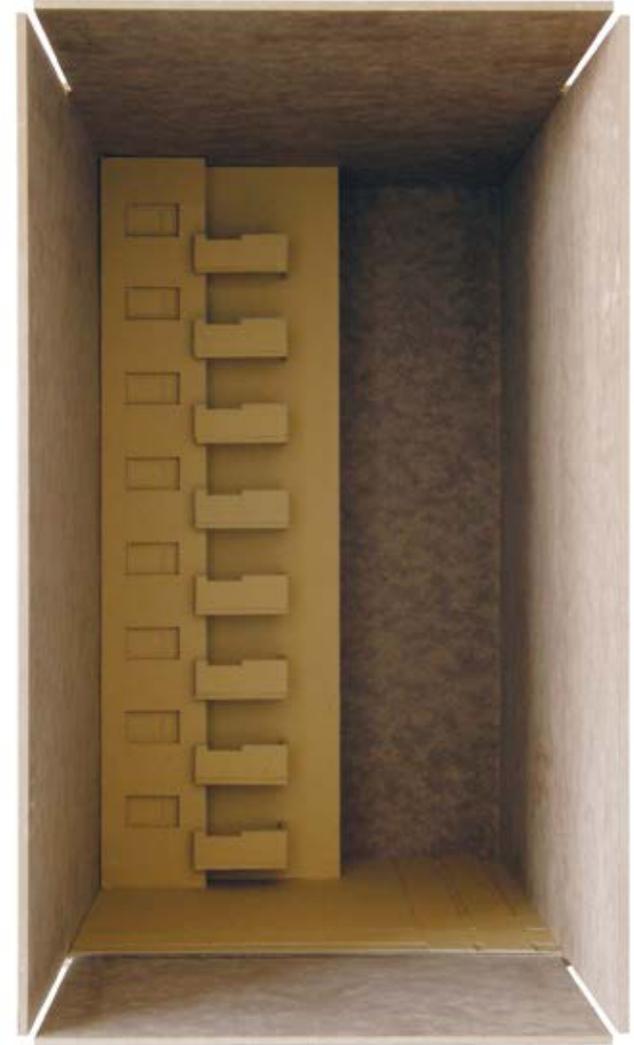
En esa hora en que la luz
tiene una figura de arena,
d. con una calle ignorada,
abierta en noble anchura de terraza,
cuyas cornisas y paredes mostraban
colores blandos como el mismo cielo
que conmovía el fondo.

Todo - la medianía de las casas,
las modestas balustradas y llamadores,
tal vez una esperanza de niña en los balcones
en mi vano corazón
con limpidez de lágrima.

Quizá esa hora de la tarde de plata
diera su ternura a la calle,
haciéndola tan real como un verso
olvidado y recuperado.

Solo después reflexioné
que aquella calle de la tarde era ajena,
que toda casa es un candelabro
donde las vidas de los hombres arden
como velas aisladas,
que todo inmediato paso nuestro
camina sobre Gólgotas.







Chapter four
TWO LIBRARIES

Fervor de Buenos Aires

I participated in an artist's residency for two months in the late spring (the austral autumn) of 2009 in Buenos Aires. I was put up in a room in a *casa de huéspedes*, a guesthouse in the Montserrat district, in the old colonial centre of the city. One of my first places to visit was the Calle México, not far from my room, and the neo-classical building that formerly housed the Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina. I knew that the library had long ago been relocated, but was interested to see the building where Jorge Luis Borges spent much of his working life as the chief librarian. It was, I imagined, the building that inspired the architecture and layout of the fantastic libraries that Borges dreamed up in his short stories.¹⁰¹

My project for the residency was to find traces of Borges's imagination and his imagined Buenos Aires in the Argentine capital of the 21st century city. I undertook a wandering process, a searching for the ineffable and unexplained within the hardness of a contemporary urban reality. I was confronted by my lack of knowledge and understanding of Argentinian society and recent history. What I took to be incongruities and flaws in the city's fabric were often the results of economic and political conditions very different from those of the relatively stable conditions of life in North America and western Europe I was accustomed to. My visit to the historic library building offered me a glimpse into the architecture and urban configuration of colonial Spanish America, but very little understanding of contemporary cultural activity in Buenos Aires. In the austral autumn of 2009, the blind poet's tracks were cold. My appreciation of Borges's encyclopaedic imagination collided with gritty everyday urban life.

In 1921, after a lengthy sojourn prolonged by the outbreak of the Great War, Borges returned from Europe with his family to Buenos Aires. In many ways this return was also his arrival to his native city; it was the young Borges's first experience as an adult of the dynamic South American metropolis. He captured his impressions of this experience

101 In the short story, "The Library of Babel", Borges conceived of a vast, infinite library containing every text ever written and ever to be written. It was originally published as "La biblioteca de Babel," in *El Jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* Editorial Sur, 1941.

in the book of poetry *Fervor de Buenos Aires*¹⁰² which he wrote and self-published soon after his return to Argentina.

It was important for me to read *Fervor de Buenos Aires*. I wanted to understand how Borges experienced the dynamism and fervour of the early 20th century city with his young, still seeing, eyes. I hoped to read the poems in English. Borges's quarter English ancestry has meant that his literature has always been influenced by Anglo Saxon motifs and references¹⁰³ and his fluency with the language meant that the English translations of his works tended to be accurate renditions of the original Spanish texts. I had trouble finding an English version of *Fervor de Buenos Aires*. After much methodical, intuitive and sporadic searching, I abandoned looking for a translation of the text. I concluded that the only way I could have access to the poems in English would be to translate them myself.

Recoleta

I put off my search for the translation of *Fervor de Buenos Aires* and, having temporarily aborted my exploration of the traces of Borges's life and work in Buenos Aires, I set out to look for sites of contemporary culture in the city I was staying in. Some of the more important institutions, museums and foundations, dedicated to contemporary art are located in the wealthier neighbourhoods of Palermo and Recoleta.¹⁰⁴ It was when I was heading to the Centro Cultural La Recoleta that I came across the relocated Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina.

The neighbourhood of Recoleta is characterised by its parks, tree-lined streets and wide sidewalks. Less frantic than Montserrat and the

historic centre of the city, it is a neighbourhood with an urban layout that allows for strolling and daydreaming. The eventual relocation in 1992 of the Biblioteca Nacional to Recoleta and its relaxed surroundings, seemed to accommodate the library users, offering the tranquillity for the concentration necessary to conduct research and study there.

The Biblioteca Nacional would serve well as a site to undertake a translation of some of Borges's work. It was the author's former place of employment and provided access to printed collections of his poems as well as to the necessary tools for their translation: dictionaries, thesauruses, etc. The modern structure in Recoleta was far removed from the neo-classical building on the Calle México that housed the library when Borges was its director, but it was located near the neighbourhood of his former residence. His literary presence was felt within the walls of the Biblioteca Nacional and one could imagine him once strolling through the park that today surrounds it.

The unique architecture of the building, one enters through a narrow colonnade supporting the mass of the concrete structure, affects the user's experience in accessing its interior. When I first visited the building, I had to register at a desk in the entrance and leave my passport before ascending to the upper floors housing the library's collections and reading rooms. Accessing documents, let alone finding space to sit down and properly consult them was very difficult, as was taking notes; at the time it was not permitted to use a personal computer or electronic device in the reading rooms. I gave up randomly perusing the library's interior and its collections that first day, determined to return later with a more focussed goal in what to look for.

Having prepared the necessary notes and gathered the required documents to permit me to enter and to study in the library, I made my way back to Recoleta across the city from my room in Montserrat. The building and its surroundings were deserted as I approached them. The H1N1 virus pandemic had led the Argentine authorities to close down schools and universities and to limit public gatherings. The library was closed indefinitely. I walked through quiet streets and rode an empty subway train back to my room. I stayed inside and, using a pocket Spanish – English dictionary, attempted to translate *Fervor de Buenos Aires*.

102 Jorge Luis Borges, *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, Imprenta Serrantes, Buenos Aires, 1923.

103 Borges's father was half English and he learnt the language as a child. He would say in an interview with Daniel Bourne and Stephen Cape in 1980 that poetry came to him through his father's books, through the English language. "I think I'm a good reader, I'm a good reader in many languages, especially in English, since poetry came to me through the English language, initially through my father's love of Swinburn, of Tennyson, and also of Keats, Shelley and so on –not through my native tongue, not through Spanish." (Borges 1980)

104 Heading there, I did not completely escape Borges. Borges lived most of his life in Palermo, on the street now named after him.

The public spaces of the city, emptied of the crowds of people that animate and activate them, the street sellers and musicians, school-children, workers, tourists..., became redundant monuments serving only to prolong their own monumentality, their use value reduced to commemoration and mourning. Boris Groys, writing about tourism, its effects on the modern city and tourists' predilection for monuments, sees these as being anchored in time. Monuments are fixed in the historical moment of their unveiling without any local specificity, "When a tourist passes through a city, the place is exposed to his gaze as something that lacks history, that is eternal, amounting to a sum of edifices that have always been there and will always remain as they are at the very moment of his arrival..." (Groys 2008, 103) The closed up *Biblioteca* became a monument to memories of the contentious era of its conception and construction.

Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina

The designs for the relocated Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina were produced in 1961 by an architectural team, including Francisco Bullrich and Alicia Cazzaniga, led by the leading figure of Argentinean brutalism Clorindo Testa. Construction on the library did not begin until 1989 and it was completed in 1992. Testa's obituary in *Architectural Review* explains the real and metaphorical delays in the building's completion, "...a building conceived during the thriving and intellectually sophisticated Buenos Aires of the '60s, which was then forced to remain in a sinister limbo during the successive military dictatorships of the '70s. Yet the democracy of the '80s failed to rescue it and the Library had to wait until the '90s to be officially opened; paradoxically, under the neoliberal government of Carlos Menem, a period that ushered in a tragic decline in the country's cultural aspirations." (Massad and Guerrero Yeste)

Clorindo Testa, an avid disciple of Le Corbusier (he said he "never paid attention to other architects."), saw slowness as an essential part of the architectural process. "The procedure is slow, but you know what you are looking forward to achieving. When you start a project you know what it is going to be like, no matter how long it will take. You modify things, but inside of you, it does not change" (Testa

in 1998 quoted by Massad and Guerrero Yeste). The ultimate completion and opening of the Biblioteca in 1992 would have affirmed his convictions.

The striking architecture of the Biblioteca appears to be a reflection of the credulous optimism of the post war international movement and its manifestation in the brutalist style. When it was completed and finally open to the public in 1992, that optimism had faded. For the visitor, such as myself, the appearance of this monument to brutalist architecture, and by extension to the ideals of another time, to the forgotten humanism of Le Corbusier's project, seemed almost nostalgic in the context of the early 21st century and the 'for profit' globalism that prevails and that, indirectly, brought me to Buenos Aires.¹⁰⁵

My initial attraction to Testa's work in Recoleta may have been due to an unarticulated recognition of the dominant architectural style of the library. Brutalist architecture was synonymous with the new and the innovative (and the controversial) when I was growing up. As Testa was Argentina's leading proponent of this style, I perhaps unknowingly recognised in his building the disturbing 'newness' of this architectural legacy and the 'uncanny-ness' of the fading of its newness, of the building 'wearing out.'

Béton brut

The term 'brutalist' is an English derivative of the French term *béton brut* used by Le Corbusier to refer to the rough forms and surfaces that the poured concrete used in this technique would often take on. The process was employed in the later post war reconstruction of western European cities and towns and for much of the urban development that took place in Europe and North America in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ As an artist in residence, I was a willing participant in the institutionalised global art paradigm, with its residency programmes, biennial exhibitions and international programmes of study.

¹⁰⁶ The term 'brutalism' resonates in the architecture of the reconstruction of post-war Britain where its economic advantages, what Anthony Vidler referred to as its "rough poetry ... of necessity, of the demand to "make do" with whatever materials were available." (Vidler 107) led to its absorption into the modern UK architectural landscape. By the early 1950s a brutalism specific to the British context, 'New Brutalism,' was being proposed by its most renowned proponents, Peter and Alison Smithson. "The

It was a relatively inexpensive way of making large buildings; the main building material was reinforced concrete. It also allowed for unique architectonic shapes in the details and the forms of the buildings.

One of the first and finest examples of brutalist architecture, and the harmonious spatial possibilities the techniques of poured reinforced concrete could offer, was the Couvent de la Tourette, (the la Tourette friary), designed and built by Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis between 1953 and 1960. The la Tourette friary was erected on concrete pylons. It was less expensive to raise the structure above the rocky incline upon which it was built than to hollow out a foundation for it. The idea of placing the superstructure of the building on concrete pylons was also used by Le Corbusier in his Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, a building I had visited and that had rested in my memory. Clorindo Testa borrowed this form for his library, placing the bulk of the building on top of a glassed-in colonnade at the entrance level.

Many of the new and expanded university campuses constructed in Canada in the 1960s and the 1970s were built in the brutalist style.¹⁰⁷ Much of my education and much of my generation's education was undertaken in this architecture. Often criticised by our professors and our parents, it framed our consciousness as a good idea gone wrong. It was the landscape of our discontent, much like the

accepted genealogy of New Brutalism credits Peter (or more probably Alison) Smithson with using the term for the first time in 1953 upon the occasion of the publication of their design for a house in Soho in *Architectural Design*; from there it was taken up by Reyner Banham in his appreciation of their Hunstanton Secondary School in the *Architectural Review* of March 1954; and the term was finally given theoretical credibility by Banham's article "The New Brutalism" in the *Architectural Review* of December 1955." (Vidler 108)

107 Two of the notable brutalist architectural projects in Canada were Arthur Erickson's Simon Fraser University campus started in 1965 in Burnaby, British Columbia and York University campus outside of Toronto started in 1962 and built by the UPACE team, led by three architects John H. Bonnick, William N. Greer and John C. Parkin. Carleton University in Ottawa, its campus designed and built by the Architectural Association for Carleton from 1959 and 1972, I remember visiting as a child, where a friend's father worked. The campus comprised a group of modern concrete buildings connected by a network of tunnels. The experience of this unfamiliar architectural layout discovered through bunker like tunnels, remained in my unconscious, as if I had once been a character in a post nuclear science fiction story. For a reflection on the architecture of the Carleton University campus see *Adrian Gröllner's Modern U* (2003) web project. (<http://cuag.carleton.ca/online/modernu/>, accessed December 8, 2015)

1960s failed housing estates that were the background for the punk generation's despair.¹⁰⁸

By the 1980s, architects and engineers moved on to other styles and practices, including the post-modern, and the enthusiasm for brutalist architecture had waned with town and university planners. Some of the materials and techniques used to reinforce and sustain the poured concrete were often neglected during the buildings' constructions and many of the structures began to crumble well before their time. I believe also, after the failures of the popular uprisings in 1968, the modern new forms of living and working space were seen as belonging to the failed revolutionary spirit and a desire for architecture that affirmed a connection with traditions and the past prevailed.¹⁰⁹

Rumour

The artist, Martin Beck, underscored the falling out of favour of brutalist architecture with his work *Rumor (June 14, 1969)* (2002). This work looks at the Art and Architecture Building at Yale University, designed by Paul Rudolph and completed in 1964. Beck's work is comprised of three photographs each showing a section of the building's façade. The photographs are accompanied with a bibliography of the mention of the building in different moments in its history that show how the interpretation and appreciation of the icon of the brutalist movement shifted from adulation to harsh critique. Manuela Ammer in her essay "A Is about Longing, B is about Mourning," writes, "The

108 The iconic image of this could be exemplified by the series of black and white photographs taken of the post punk group Joy Division by the photographer Anton Corbijn in Manchester and nearby Macclesfield, two members of the group's home town, (which Corbijn later restaged in his 2007 film *Control*). The bleak expanses of the deteriorating industrial landscape serve as a backdrop for the unsettled atmosphere of Joy Division's words and music.

109 Robert Venturi, writing in 1965, was one of the architects who led the charge for a re-examination of "orthodox modern" priorities in architecture. In, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture: Selections from a Forthcoming Book," he called for a renewed appreciation of "complexity" and "sophistication" in architecture. "Orthodox modern architects have tended to recognize complexity either insufficiently or inconsistently. In their attempt to break with tradition and start all over again, they idealized the primitive and elementary at the expense of diversity and sophistication. As participants in a revolutionary movement, they acclaimed the newness of modern function over its complexity" (Venturi 19, 1965)

associated bibliographies document the shifting critical reception of the building since its completion in 1963—from modernist masterpiece to symbol of modernism’s failure to icon of 20th-century architecture.” Ammer goes on to explain the significance of the title of Beck’s work that refers to a contentious moment in the building’s history. “During the student unrest of the late 1960s, more precisely, on June 14, 1969, the building caught fire, and it was rumoured - yet never confirmed - that it was a case of arson. This event -this rumour- altered the building’s standing dramatically and caused its temporary critical demise from masterpiece to cautionary tale.” (Ammer 2013, 144)

To understand the complex, ‘lived,’ history of a building such as the Biblioteca Nacional or the Art and Architecture Building, one is led to consider not just what has been documented and written about it, but also what has been said about it “off the record”. One finds oneself listening to, what Martin Beck refers to as, the ‘rumours and murmurs’ surrounding the building’s construction and use. Manuela Ammer explains how these unwritten and unsubstantiated forms of communication operate in Beck’s work.

However, what they lack in credibility they make up in impact, since a multitude of voices, whether they speak the truth or not, creates an actuality of its own. Structurally, rumours and murmurs can be described as rhizomatic phenomena with no origin, no end, and no perspective-or, rather, a plentitude of perspectives. Non-hierarchical and beyond one authority’s control, rumours and murmurs are essentially about establishing connections and creating patterns that reverberate. (Ammer 2013, 144)

My experience of the Biblioteca was thus conditioned by what I knew of brutalist architecture, a sketchy official history and a more profound unconscious memory of buildings that had passed from innovative and novel to obsolete and oppressive in my lifetime, as well as what I had (over) heard about the building’s history, how it was planned but not built for over two decades, how the divisive politics of Argentina ossified the legacy of Borges’s library and stalled its future declinations for over thirty years. This unfounded, yet hauntingly

resonant, insight into the library’s histories and futures resulted in a building that seemed at once unfinished and a ruin of a past that never happened. The success of brutalist architecture is its manifestation of the presumed failure of a generation of architects, politicians and town planners.

Martin Beck’s *Rumor (June 14, 1969)* illustrates the genealogy of a seminal case of a ‘failed’ brutalist project. The perceived failure of the modernist project for architecture has parallels in the the repeated failures of media technologies that underlie much modern and post-modern cultural critique. Failure is a feature of an archaeology where dead technologies tell us, perhaps, more about the history of our collective desires than do the successful technologies that figure prominently in our changing media landscape. Jussi Parikka, quoting Jennifer Gabrys, writes about media archaeology as an area of research fuelled by, “the fossils of forgotten dreams, the residue of collapsed utopias, and the program of obsolescence.” (Parikka 2012, 167) The lifespan of a given media varies greatly but it is not difficult to look back in our lifetimes to the passing into near obsolescence of popular media, be it cassette tapes, 35 mm film or AM radio. The failure of an architectural project would seem to occur as a less apparent phenomenon; for those not following architectural debates, the failure of brutalist architecture became a *fait accompli* before we noticed that there was anything wrong with it.

504

To an uninformed foreigner like myself in Buenos Aires, one who is easily swayed by rumours and murmurs, the fading and *dépassée* architecture of the Biblioteca Nacional also appears to manifest the failures associated with a recent history of Argentina; the harsh dictatorship, the lost conflict over the Islas Malvinas and the financial crisis the country endured in recent decades all influenced my perception of the striking edifice. The architecture of the Biblioteca also seemed to belong to a paradigm of obsolete design and technology that, to me, characterised many of the artefacts of the Buenos Aires urban landscape. One manifestation that resonated in particular with me was the recurring sight of older model European automobiles, Volkswagens, Renaults and Peugeots, in particular the Peugeot 504 sedan.

I remarked on the number of Peugeot 504 sedans to be found in Buenos Aires during my residency there in 2009. These intrigued me as production of these models had ended in Europe more than 25 years before my visit (the car was briefly imported to North America, but was always a rare sight there). I learnt that Peugeot had a plant in Argentina and that the 504 remained in production there until 1999. The 504 was introduced in Europe in 1968. Its launching in Paris was postponed due to the social unrest there in the spring of that year.¹¹⁰ After its launch, the model was seen as an antithesis to the radicalism of the student movement; the 504 was an elegant reliable car to be driven by the then growing affluent middle class. It was a popular model and it sold in the millions in Europe before production there ended in 1983. As with other European exports, the 504 was marketed much longer in Argentina. The 504 was an unspectacular icon (unlike the Citroën DS whose unique form provoked critical reflection from Roland Barthes¹¹¹) that embodied the hope of the post-war economic boom and the aspirations of (European) international design remained a steady feature of the Buenos Aires streetscape well into the 21st century.

Like the architecture of La Biblioteca, the faded utopian technological promise of the Peugeot 504 resonates as something at once familiar and strange. The 504s driven in the streets of Buenos Aires appeared to me to exist simultaneously in the present, the past and the future.¹¹² Outside of time, they were one of many anachronistic

110 According to Wikipedia: "Peugeot's flagship, the 504 made its public debut on 12 September 1968 at the Paris Salon. The press launch which had been scheduled for June 1968 was at the last minute deferred by three months, and production got off to a similarly delayed start because of the political and industrial disruption which exploded across France in May 1968." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peugeot_504#cite_note-Motor196809-3, consulted February 5, 2016, quoting Paul Frère, "Continental Diary". *The Motor*, 3455, 7 September 1968, 37)

111 Roland Barthes wrote "The New Citroën," an elegy to the DS 19 in 1957. "There are in the D.S. the beginnings of a new phenomenology of assembling, as if one progressed from a world where elements are welded to a world where they are juxtaposed and hold together by sole virtue of their wondrous shape, which of course is meant to prepare one for the idea of a more benign Nature." (Barthes 1972, 87-88)

112 The 504 embodied a vision of a future for French society when it was launched in Paris in 1968, albeit a conservative alternative to the radical future proposed by the participants in the social movements of that year.

aberrations of the urban landscape.¹¹³ The automobile has never been a manifestation of the new; despite the inevitable sales pitch, a new model iteration is not a teleology of all technological developments progressing to its launch. A car constitutes rather an ecology of technologies and knowhow from different eras, using, simultaneously, primitive technologies of movement, Bronze Age forging techniques, 19th century industrial production and tools and, more recently, satellite based navigation systems borrowed from military applications. Jussi Parikka looks to how Michel Serres uses the car as an example of how temporalities co-exist as an "assemblage" of different technologies from different times, in his definition of media archaeology.

... what is distinctive of even technology such as cars that are only contemporary as an aggregation of various temporally disparate scientific and technological ideas. From the Neolithic invention of the wheel to recent electronics, the car is itself an assemblage. We imagine our technological cultures as modern, contemporary or even progressive, but such approaches are simplifications. (Parikka 2012, 146)

Michel Serres locates his observations on the automobile's technology as a questioning of the monopoly on temporal advancement that modernity laid claim to. The car is an example of how time does not unravel in a continuous roll leading to the modern and beyond, but rather in folds and pleats, allowing different temporalities to meet each other and coexist at different moments.

'we are always simultaneously making gestures that are archaic, modern and futuristic. Earlier I took the example of a car, which can be dated from several eras; every historical era is likewise a

113 Perhaps I was attracted to the Peugeot, as a manifestation of a co-existing past and present, as my initial project for my residency at Buenos Aires was to research a Borges short story 'The other' (Jorge Luis Borges, "El otro" in *El libro de arena*, Alianza Editorial S.A., 1975) in which the author, sitting on a park bench, meets himself as a young man. In formulating my project for Buenos Aires, I speculated that this co-existence of two temporalities was a condition particular to that city.

multitemporal, simultaneously drawing from the obsolete, the contemporary, and the futuristic. An object, a circumstance, is thus polychromic, multitemporal, and reveals a time that is gathered together, with multiple pleats.' (Serres and Latour 1995: 60, quoted in Parikka 2012, 146)

The 504, like the brutalist architecture of the Biblioteca, I experienced in a temporal pleat. While both occupied, and functioned in, the space and time of my everyday existence, they referred to other temporalities that I could only read as historical.

Bibliothèque centrale

The physical appearance of the Biblioteca, its architecture, exists as a temporal pleating, referring simultaneously to a combination of time frames. The internal workings of the library, its operations, are also an assemblage of different technologies from different times; a library is an archival system that has its genealogy in Antiquity and in the monasteries of the Dark Ages, documents that are products of movable type and printing press technologies of the 15th century, a 20th century classification system and a web based catalogue and retrieval system that borrows from the Internet browsers recently developed in the last turn of the century. This assemblage of temporalities allows for ruptures in the folds, making overseen or redundant information appear like digital artefacts or glitches. One occurrence of this apparition of such a rupture in a library's temporal assemblage happened to me when using the library of the university where I work. While perusing the stacks of Université du Québec à Montréal's Bibliothèque centrale, I happened upon an unexpected document that forced me to reconsider certain presumptions I held about the institution I worked for and its history.

The building housing the Université du Québec à Montréal's central, arts, education and law libraries, part of the university's main campus, was opened in 1978. The Université du Québec à Montréal, or UQAM, was founded ten years earlier partly in an attempt to provide more university places for the francophone majority of the province of Quebec. In the spirit of the times, the university also followed (and, ostensibly,

still follows) an egalitarian mandate, offering affordable education to a large section of the population.

The architecture of the university's main campus is composed of a poured concrete infrastructure partially-clad inside and out in brown brick. As is common for libraries built at this time, the building has limited fenestration; strips of fluorescent tubes constantly illuminate most of the interior space. What windows there are perforate the walls of the vast, low ceilinged, interior at regular intervals, providing library users with slices of the urban ebb and flow surrounding the campus. To access the library, one must pass through one of a number of street or subway level entries to the campus, descend one level if necessary, and then follow a labyrinth of underground tunnels to its only public entrance. Once inside, to consult most of the documents, it is necessary to go up two floors, either by elevator or by two flights of stairs seeming to lead to nowhere.

Taking this circuitous itinerary to the stacks, and to many of the study areas, results in the visitor feeling disoriented; the views onto the streets are at first unfamiliar and seem to be in another city. The physical and mental confusion one experiences after the long route taken to arrive at the stacks makes the scenes through the narrow windows appear cinematic. One feels the same distance from the activities occurring outside as one does from the scenes unfolding on a movie screen.¹¹⁴ The outside world, the city, becomes diegetic, the literature, the made up stories contained in the books on the stacks become not so different from the goings on of the world outside the library walls.

The stacks of the central library of UQAM, are enclosed in the late brutalist architecture of the university housing them.¹¹⁵ In this concrete lined, bunker-like space the library users have direct access to the shelves of books. Encompassed by the logically structured rows

114 The distance is not only mental, but physical. The stacks are on an upper floor of the library building and the sidewalk is several metres away from its exterior wall; one is slightly above and looking down at an angle on passers-by, much like the position one is in when watching a film from the inclined rows of seats in a cinema looking down on the screen.

115 The Pavillon Hubert-Aquin housing the libraries was designed and built by Dimitri Dimakopoulos et Associés and Jodoin, Lamarre, Pratte et Associés between 1975 and 1979.

of archived knowledge, their gaze is periodically interrupted by the views of the unfolding daily activities of the city outside. Jussi Parikka, in *What is Media Archaeology?*, reminds us of the archive's genealogy in the libraries of Antiquity, and how the first archives were delimited by the architecture housing them: "This classical form of the archive was territorial, spatialized and walled – where the walls of the institution was also the border of its symbolic functions ..." (Parikka 2012, 114) The architecture of UQAM affirms this marginalisation of the world outside as the chaos of the city seems incoherent and redundant beyond the structured archive of its libraries' collections.

A frontispiece

I was in the central library of UQAM looking to find a French translation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd." This short story is, for me, an important fantasy on the urban condition of 19th century London, a condition that resulted in the projection of anonymous wandering individuals into the urban landscape. These ghostly figures, who were not the economically disinterested *flâneurs* of 19th century Paris, (nor were they the 'tramps' and homeless of North America, so visible from the windows of the library looking out onto the streets of the city's gritty downtown), intrigued Poe as the lost souls, the phantoms, of cities grown beyond a scale apprehensible to human perception. Both real and imagined, they remain in the collective unconscious of the urban dweller today, perhaps as warnings as to the danger of wandering too much, of losing any connection to home and to identity.

I found a copy of *Le scarabée d'or*, a selection of Poe's short stories translated by Charles Baudelaire.¹¹⁶ I leafed through the book. I was surprised to find, glued into the front cover, a label indicating that the book was "presented" to the university "in the interests of better understanding between the peoples of the United States and Canada," by the United States Information Service. With a little research, I was

able to learn that the United States Information Service, or the USIS, operated libraries and reading rooms, "...in virtually every country with which the United States maintains diplomatic relations," (Manning 2001, 269) from 1953 when it took over from the United States Information Agency until its being dismantled in 1992. Reading between the lines, it becomes evident that the USIS had a mandate to promote American values abroad during the propaganda battles of the Cold War; the establishment of libraries in the then non-aligned states and in the former communist countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the service's priorities.

Two questions are raised surrounding the discovery of the USIS frontispiece in a book in the UQAM library: Why did the United States Information Service donate books to UQAM? Why did the Université du Québec à Montréal accept (or even solicit) the donations from the USIS? Normally, this discovery would not seem remarkable; most libraries are happy to accept donations from many sources, including foreign government services, but the circumstances of this donation made the existence of the label seem unusual.

While Canada would not have been the main focus of the service's activities, UQAM may have held the attention of U.S. foreign policy makers in the 1970s. While never aligning itself directly with the revolutionary politics of the period, UQAM was home to many of Quebec's leftist intellectuals and to thinkers behind a strong movement calling for a Quebec independent from the rest of Canada.

The USIS seemed to have followed their mandate to create better understandings between the peoples of the United States and Canada by making American literature available to the students of UQAM. An inquiry into when the books were donated to the library remains inconclusive. As UQAM was founded in 1968 and the USIS ceased to exist in 1992, we know that the donations were made between those years. The publication dates of the books found would suggest that the books were not all donated at the same time. The graphics and printing techniques of the frontispieces would indicate that the donations started in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

Working with Gisèle Guay, the university's librarian responsible for literature and the arts, I tried to find out as much as I could about the USIS donation to UQAM. Little or no information about it has

¹¹⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, *Le scarabée d'or : Suivi de 23 histoires extraordinaires*, traduit par Charles Baudelaire, Paris: Le Livre Club du Libraire, 1958.

survived the digitalisation of the library's catalogues which began twenty years earlier; the provenance of the books in the library's collections is not included in the meta data stored in the online catalogue, the paper archives have mostly been destroyed or disappeared and anyone working in the library at the time of the donation has since retired. As the circulation data collected prior to the library's shift to digital records in the 1990s had also not been archived, it was impossible to determine when the books were first borrowed from the library.

Like the walled architecture housing the classical archives, the classification system and record keeping of the digitised library are, in part, constructed to negate information that is deemed superfluous. The records of the donation from the USIS were, at some point in the reorganisation of the UQAM library's files, overlooked or considered of little importance and thus deleted from the records. Jussi Parikka quotes Cornelia Vismann when she looks to how discourses, including legal ones, build symbolic walls that function to exclude and render meaningless anything outside of their jurisdiction. "The wall designated to surround the symbolic order of the law once the codification is complete turns everything outside into rubbish and file trash" (Vismann 2008: 64, quoted by Parikka 2012, 83). It seems the USIS donation was not deemed worthy of recording within the discourse and history of the library's collections.

Without knowing the answer to why the donation was made, I felt it necessary to find out which books were donated; the titles and authors of the books could somehow provide a clue as to why they were there. The librarian and I ultimately concluded that the most direct way to discover which these books were would be to come across them in the same manner as I did the copy of *Le scarabée d'or*, to wander through the rows of shelves and the classified structure of the library code to find the books in the stacks.

My wandering, my search, was not at this stage for content, but rather, through the Library of Congress classification structure, for codes. In this manner, I was looking at the workings of the system rather than for any meaning I might find within them. Jussi Parikka claims that a methodology inherent to media archaeology is one that looks beyond discursive elements and to, what Wolfgang Ernst refers to

as the "agency of the machine." (Ernst 2005: 591, quoted by Parikka 2012, 83). This method is related to the foundation of an archaeology of media that comes from software technology, based in programming code. "The techno-episteme starts from the machinic archive, even if, problematically, this conceptualization does not extend to discussing the aspects of politics in such an epistemology." (Parikka 2012, 83) What seemed at first to be a quest for information with an implicit political meaning, became a sideways look at an outmoded classification system of an archive of knowledge.

American literature is to be found under the codes PS1 to PS3626 in the Library of Congress classification. These codes could be found on the rows 169 and 170 of the central library's stacks. The librarian and I methodically checked the spine of every book on the shelves in this section. We eliminated all of those that would have been published after 1992. We then looked in the front covers of the remaining books. In total 43 books were found with the frontispiece of the USIS inside their covers.¹¹⁷ The 43 books found may not constitute all of the books donated to the library by the USIS. Some of the books could have been on loan when we did our research, or they could have been lost, destroyed or discarded. It would be reasonable, however, to assume that we found most of the books in the American literature section; all of the books found had not been borrowed for many years and the librarian doubted that any of the donated books would have been discarded. It is interesting to note that both English and French texts were donated, and that only one copy of each work (in either of the two languages, but never in both) were found.

Attempts at finding books with the USIS frontispiece in other sections, in fine arts, architecture and cinema were unsuccessful. One can thus assume that the 43 volumes found make up a fairly accurate sketch of the collection of books of and about American literature donated by the USIS. As none of the books have a publication date later than 1974, it is a collection that would have been put together that year or soon after (if the books were, as it would seem, all donated at the same time).

117 A complete list of all the books is to be found at the end of this chapter.

The titles making up the USIS donation to UQAM survey the history of American literature looking back from a viewpoint in the mid 1970s. It is a history that contains the 19th century classics that helped develop the nascent national American psyche, from the humour of Mark Twain to the bravado of Jack London. It also contains darker images of the American dream by, among others, Theodore Dreiser and Arthur Miller. In the era of the oil crisis and in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, literature that conveyed unease and despair perhaps seemed to offer observations and reflections on what may have gone wrong in a nation that, to many, held so much promise.

In the interests of better understanding

The book in which I first found the USIS frontispiece, Charles Baudelaire's translation of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories offers another, perhaps less evident, facet of the legacy of American literature. The dark fantasies that Poe imagined were not only translated by the French poet, but also transposed onto the urban malaise that Baudelaire saw developing in the newly modern city of the 19th century. The characters in Edgar Allan Poe's mysteries became ciphers for the side effects of modernity; the man of the crowd embodying the feelings of anonymity the wandering individuals migrating to the cities would have experienced. It is interesting to consider that this collection of books, including Baudelaire's dreamlike and debauched translations of Poe's macabre fantasies, constitute an archive of texts that somehow could promote an understanding between the people of the United States and those of Canada.

At the time of writing this text, the USIS donation to the UQAM library has been forgotten about. The books donated are all but redundant to the library users; they have rarely been borrowed in the past decade and most of the literature has entered the public domain and is now available online. While there is little reason for the students to refer to the USIS donation in the library, the books' real presence on its shelves and their virtual presence in its electronic catalogue help the library complete its selection of American literature. In this sense, the USIS donation makes up a very small, but not insignificant, part of

the collection of the library and subsequently inform the literary and aesthetic references of the university.¹¹⁸

Coming across the documents making up the USIS donation required unorthodox, perhaps outdated, research methods. I physically wandered the stacks, handling books over forty years old, mostly paperbacks in library binding, in search of the intriguing red, white and blue frontispiece. It was not a consultation of an online database, but rather a perusal of the library's architecture, its bookcases, their shelves and the documents arranged upon them.

The interior layout of the UQAM library is labyrinthine. The circuitous access routes and the multiple rows of shelves allow for visitors to lose their bearings. Searching an alpha-numerical code within this contorted repetitive architecture contributes to the spatial malaise of not knowing where one is anymore in relation to the geography of the city. One enters with the purpose of finding a document, information, knowledge, but is easily overcome by the physical complexity of the task and loses one's focus, wandering among the shelves and the rows of coded books.

The United States Information Service also contributed to the urban landscape of Montreal in a more monumental and enduring way than, it would seem, through the donation of books to a library. Beginning with the 1958 Brussels world exposition and until it ceased operations in 1992, the USIS held the responsibility for the design, construction and operation of its country's pavilions, including the Buckminster Fuller designed geodesic dome built for Expo 67 in Montreal. Donated to the government of Canada after the closing of the world exposition in the fall of 1967, the former United States Pavilion, the Biosphere, remains a tourist attraction and a landmark in the city. Its striking form and unique architecture has all but outlived its

118 The references to American literature are numerous in the research conducted at the university. In 2001, UQAM researchers Jean-François Chassay and Bertrand Gervais edited *Edgar Allan Poe. Une pensée de la fin*, (Edgar Allan Poe. *Une pensée de la fin*, ed. Jean-François Chassay and Bertrand Gervais, Liber, Montréal, 2001) a collection of essays by fellow researchers on the metaphysics, the poetics and the themes of Poe's oeuvre.

contents.¹¹⁹ Set on Île Ste-Hélène in the Saint Lawrence River, the geodesic dome rises over a small forest on the island, appearing at the vanishing point at the end of many of Montreal's streets presenting a beacon¹²⁰ of the future as a near illusion, just beyond the reach of those wandering the city today.

119 Buckminster Fuller's dome now houses the government of Canada's Biosphere Environment Museum. The original multi-level interior architecture, once featuring the longest escalator in North America, was long ago dismantled. The current interior lacks the magnitude of the dynamic geometric form of the structure's exterior.

120 The Biosphere today is in fact the husk of a short-lived beacon fire. The dome was a ball of flames and smoke when the Plexiglas panels of its exoskeleton caught fire and burnt off in May of 1976.

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Chapter five
A PANORAMA AND ITS INVERSION

The Krugovaya Kinopanorama

In the summer of 2010, with fellow doctoral researcher and film artist Sami van Ingen, I visited the Krugovaya (circular) Kinopanorama in Moscow. Located in the All-Russia Exhibition Centre, (VDNKh), one of the former Soviet Union's monuments to technological progress, this multi-screen, multi-projector cinema was built in 1959, reportedly after Nikita Khrushchev had visited a circular cinema in Disneyland and proclaimed that the Soviet Union needed the same, only better. At the time of our visit in 2010, the 360-degree cinema in Moscow was one of the few functioning circular cinemas still showing material on film.¹²¹

Panoramic cinemas have existed in the peripheries of the commercial moving image paradigm for decades, at least since the Circle-Vision technology was put on show at Disneyland for the first time in 1955.¹²² My experience with circular cinema dates back to Expo 67 in Montreal where, as a child, I experienced a Circle-Vision film shown in the Telephone pavilion. I vaguely remember seeing "cinema in the round" in London as part of a tourist attraction in the early 1970s, but I had not experienced a circular cinema presentation since my early childhood. In 2009, I read an article in the *Berliner Zeitung*, about the Krugovaya Kinopanorama. When I understood that the cinema was still in operation and possible to visit, I began planning the trip to Moscow.

First opened in 1939, the VDNKh is a large park containing over 400 buildings. At the time of our visit, most of these, (many were built as pavilions for the former Soviet republics), were emptied of their displays and were either closed or had been transformed into impromptu

121 Circular cinemas were a staple of world expositions and were a common attraction at amusement parks. It is difficult now to determine how many are still in operation and which of those are still projecting film. I am not aware of any still operating in western Europe, nor in Canada. There were several in operation in the former USSR, but I believe the Krugovaya Kinopanorama to be the only working one of these left. I understand a circular cinema was opened fairly recently in the south of China.

122 The dream of a moving image that encircles the viewer predates developments in cinema technology refined by the Lumière brothers among others at the end of the 19th century. Circular, painted, panoramas, were installed in European capitals in the mid 1800s. Many of these incorporated mechanical and theatrical devices to animate the scene surrounding the viewers. Multi-projection, panoramic cinema has been experimented with at least since the 1920s. Abel Gance's ambitious film project *Napoléon* (1926) used three projectors to create an early form of widescreen cinema.

shops. In the summer of 2010, the VDNKh, as well as being a place for Muscovites to stroll, rollerblade and enjoy outdoor restaurants and cafés, functioned as an amusement park with a variety of attractions, including what was advertised as a 4D cinema. Remarkably, one of the few buildings still used for its original function in the park during our visit was the Krugovaya Kinopanorama.

With the help of online translation services and polyglot colleagues in Helsinki, Sami and I managed to decipher the Russian website for the cinema. We planned our trip around days when there would be two afternoon screenings. We travelled in July and it was very warm in Moscow. When we arrived at the cinema, in time for the afternoon's first screening, we were made aware (the cashier only spoke Russian which neither of us understood) that the announced film programme would not be shown. We waited, not knowing what to do. A couple showed up. The cashier sold them tickets and then called us over to sell us our tickets. She then proceeded to open up the cinema for the screening. We returned later in the afternoon for the day's second screening. The same cashier looked at us with a combination of displeasure and frustration. I think I said to Sami, "She really doesn't like us." We made the assumption that the woman did not want to go through all the effort of opening the cinema and seeing that the projectors would be turned on for the sole benefit of two foreign visitors. It was only when another prospective cinema goer, a Russian who spoke English very well, arrived and spoke with the woman, that we learnt that her reluctance to show the films was due to her concern for the preservation of the aging equipment and film reels. It would seem that running the projectors in the July heat could risk damaging what would now be irreplaceable material.

As a site of an experimental and immersive form of cinematic presentation, the Krugovaya Kinopanorama is an unintended precursor to the experimental cinema movement of the 1960s and 1970s where film artists explored multiple projections on different surfaces as well as to the multi-screen video installations developed by artists in the 1980s and 1990s. While the Circle-Vision cinemas and the Kinopanorama sought to create the illusion of a seamless image surrounding the viewer and demanded highly synchronised apparatuses, much of expanded cinema played with the random qualities of multiple image

playback. Gene Youngblood, who explored the "expanded cinema"¹²³ capacities of experimental films of the 1960s in his book of the same name, saw the practice of projecting multiple images simultaneously as a kind of performance art.

In real-time multiple-projection, cinema becomes a performing art: the phenomenon of image-projection itself becomes the "subject" of the performance and in a very real sense the medium is the message. But multi-projection lumina art is more significant as a paradigm for an entirely different kind of audio-visual experience, a tribal language that expresses not ideas but a collective group consciousness. (Youngblood 1970, 387)

The Krugovaya Kinopanorama reflects a utopia in which technology and architecture embody a promise for society. While the Disneyland Circle-Vision that Khrushchev visited surrounded the spectator with 9 screens, the Kinopanorama used two rows of projections, totalling 22 screens. 11 projectors (the images were split by prisms to reach two rows of 11 screens)¹²⁴ showed films that displayed the variety of the land and peoples of the many different republics of the Soviet Union.

The films we saw were rhythmic montages featuring the different places and inhabitants of the former republics. There were many examples of folk dances from different regions. The circular form of the projection lent itself to the choreography and movements of the dances. We also saw close up animations of the architecture and artefacts associated with the cultures presented. Many of these scenes were followed by travelling shots along highways and roads, showing off the capabilities of the 11 camera apparatus as well as the transportation infrastructure of the USSR.

The content of the films projected in the Kinopanorama reflected the exhibitions in the pavilions of the VDNKh. One could imagine

123 The term "expanded cinema" was first used by the filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek in the 1960s and is generally understood to refer to moving image works (film and video) that expand on the relationship between audience and film image to engage the conditions and space of viewing.

124 In 2010, when we visited it, the films shown in the Kinopanorama were projected on 11 screens in a single row.

travelling to Moscow from the regions, to the centre of the federation, to watch elaborate cinematic representations of the same regions. The unifying effect on the inhabitants of the different republics these productions were intended to foster ultimately failed; we watched footage from Georgia, Estonia, Latvia and other republics that have now been independent from Russia for over 20 years. The breakup of the Soviet Union came about after the political and economic failure of the federation's rigid centralised state apparatus. The national model presented in the films shown in the Kinopanorama attempts to contradict the operative centralisation of the federation by showing a variety of ethnic and cultural diversity based on regional differences.

Panoramas

The model of the VDNKh was that of the world exposition, a model for a travel destination of mass distraction that Walter Benjamin identified in his *Arcades Project* (his *Passagen-Werk*), the expansive and unfinished collection of notes on the architecture, urban planning and sociocultural intricacies of nineteenth-century Paris. "World exhibitions glorify the exchange value of the commodity. They create a framework in which its use value recedes into the background. They open a phantasmagoria which a person enters in order to be distracted." (Benjamin 1999, 7)

Like the distracting effect of world expositions, Benjamin wrote of the distancing effect of the panorama on nineteenth-century urban life. In the *Arcades Project* he talked about the city dilating, becoming a landscape to behold in the same way the landscape of battle scenes and exotic places were presented in the great panoramas installed in urban centres, in Paris, Berlin, London, and Moscow in the 1800s.

Announcing an upheaval in the relation of art to technology, panoramas are at the same time an expression of a new attitude toward life. The city dweller, whose political supremacy over the provinces is demonstrated many times in the course of the century, attempts to bring the countryside into town. In panoramas, the city opens out to landscape – as it will do later, in subtler fashion, for the *flâneurs*. (Benjamin 1999, 6)

Benjamin's vision of a dilated urban landscape articulated by panoramic apparatuses and the imaginary cities of world expositions held well into the 20th century. The site of Expo 67 in Montreal was, perhaps, one of the last memorable instances of large numbers travelling great distances to a temporary, model city, where they visited exhibitions displaying imagery and artefacts from distant places. It also crystallised the recent developments in moving image technology, showcasing the latest achievements and experiments with film, video and sound techniques.¹²⁵

In an essay written in 1938 at the time Benjamin was putting together his *Arcades Project*, Dolf Sternberger also posited the panorama as a cultural and technical apparatus for understanding the workings of 19th century culture. For Sternberger, the panorama embodied the colonial world outlook of its time and the rapid developments in travel occurring then. His essay *Panorama oder Ansichten vom 19. Jahrhundert*¹²⁶ links the panorama to the rapid popularity of landscape painting in that century that was, in part, due to the opening up of distant lands through rail travel.¹²⁷ Jussi Parikka and Erkki Huhtamo write of the significance of Sternberger's project:

Both Benjamin and Sternberger were interested in the panorama as a visual manifestation of the nineteenth-century culture. However, their approaches differ in important respects. For Benjamin, the panorama was just one of the manifestations of the larger topic he was trying to get hold of, while for

125 There have been several publications dealing with the experimentations in film and moving image presentation at World's Fairs. A recent example of these is *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67*, edited by Monika Kin Gagnon and Janine Marchessault.

126 Translated in English as "Panorama of the 19th Century" Dolf Sternberger and Joachim Neugroschel in: *October*, Vol. 4 (Autumn, 1977), 3-20, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts.

127 Much of my worry the condition dings.subsequent looking around Sternberger remarked on the relationship between rail travel and the experience of viewing the circular panoramas, popular urban attractions in 19th century Europe: "The railroad elaborated the new world of experience, the countries and oceans, into a panorama. It not only connected previously remote places with one another by freeing the vanquished route of all resistance, disparity, and adventure; but, more important, since travelling became so comfortable and universal, it turned the eyes of travelers outward, offering them a rich diet of changing tableaux, the only possible experience during a trip." (Sternberger and Neugroschel 1977, 10)

Sternberger it became nothing less than the organizing metaphor for his portrait of an era, the key to unlock the secrets of, in the words of his book's subtitle, "how nineteenth century man saw himself and his world and how he experienced history." In his book Sternberger deals less with concrete panoramas than with their manifestations in cultural phenomena as diverse as steam power, railway travel, the Western idea of the Orient, the theory of evolution, and domestic lighting. (Huhtamo and Parikka 2011, 7)

On our trip to Moscow I convinced my travelling companion to also visit the Panorama Borodino, a circular panorama from 1912, now located near the Pobedy Park. While the temporal distance of the scene reconstructed was great; the Battle of Borodino took place in 1812, almost 200 years prior to our visit, the attention to detail and the spatial trompe l'oeil in the painting by Franz Roubaud as well as the three dimensional features and lighting of the apparatus were successful in transporting us to the battle site.¹²⁸

The architecture of the panorama, in its many derivations, was developed with and influenced the use of filmic and electronic presentations of the moving image. In the "kinopanorama", or cinema in the round, the viewer is surrounded by the moving image and is thus required to be mobile, to turn in different directions and to move around to watch it. This mode of viewing and its circular architecture borrows from, and expands upon, the "panoramas", like the Panorama Borodino, the scenic paintings "in-the-round" that were housed in circular buildings designed for their display, installed in European cities in the 19th century.¹²⁹

128 The Borodino Panorama was shown for the first time in Moscow in 1912 on the centenary of the famous battle in a wooden building built for its display. By 1918 the building was in ruins and the panorama was put into storage. In 1962, on the battle's 150th anniversary, the restored panorama was newly exhibited in a modern museum built to house it. Information on the panorama can be found on the museum's website: <http://www.1812panorama.ru/english.html> (consulted on October 21, 2014).

129 The Canadian artist Jeff Wall, who often refers to 19th century optical apparatuses in his art practice and writing, made a photo work, *Restoration* (1993), showing conservators in the process of working on the restoration of the Bourbaki Panorama in Lucerne, Switzerland. Wall's backlit photo shows a wide interior view of the building housing Edouard Castres 1881 panoramic painting of French General Charles Denis Sauter

Dolf Sternberger's 1938 essay reflects upon the aesthetic and historical legacy of these apparatuses of attraction, noting that most panoramas depicted scenes of recently fought (and won by the nations in which they were built) battles. Scenes from the Napoleonic and Franco-Prussian wars predominated in the panorama of Sternberger's German homeland. He remarks on how a panorama that opened to the public in Berlin in 1883 depicting the Battle of Sedan in 1870 operated to take the visitor to the location of the battle, but also to its time, to the specific, deciding, moment of the Prussian victory.

Thus carried away (if not beyond space and time, then from everyday life to a time thirteen years ago and a place several hundred kilometers away), the visitor is almost casually changed from a passerby to an eyewitness of highly significant events; he finds himself surrounded by none other than "the delightful Valley of the Maas" and the military operations unfolding therein. (Sternberger and Neugroschel 1977, 3-4)

Sternberger also describes the technical intricacy of the panorama apparatus that could include a rotating platform to facilitate the viewing of the painted and reconstructed scene.¹³⁰

The Kaiser had a special treat on opening day, a small heightening of the platform, which, on request, would slowly revolve, "affording the spectator, with no effort required on his part, a view in the round of the panorama," a circumstance more likely to ensure his being carried away, or rather detached, from himself ... (Sternberger and Neugroschel 1977, 3-4)

Bourbaki's retreat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871, leading his battle weary troops through the snow in Switzerland. The circular form of the panorama is cropped in Wall's photo and a woman is depicted looking out of the frame. The artist deliberately hides a section of the panorama to emphasise its immersive form.

130 Louis Daguerre, the inventor of the daguerreotype, one of the earliest photographic techniques, along with Charles Bouton, developed a revolving cylindrical form of landscape painting that predated and anticipated the painted panorama. The first exhibition of Bouton and Daguerre's dioramas opened in 1822 in Paris. The slowly rotating diorama painting would be "watched" by a large paying audience through a proscenium opening in one wall of a circular auditorium.

Dolf Sternberger's essay is referred to by Jussi Parikka in *What is Media Archaeology?* as an early case study of the practice and methods of media archaeology. Although Sternberger was not writing as a film historian, his reflections of the panorama present it very much as a time-based medium installed in a dedicated architectural space. The temporality of the medium is revealed in the durational manner in which it is experienced; the viewer moves around, or is moved around, the space of the image, and in the temporal diegesis of what is depicted; as Sternberger explains it is not only a particular place that is reconstructed, but also a particular moment in time that evokes and depends upon a narrative of what happened before and after the scene depicted.

This mirage of the moment was not useless, for the moment was renowned. Granted, the renown and the name, The Battle of Sedan, were lost in the carefully enumerated detail of a particular strategic situation, whose drama could be evoked only by explaining the before and after, since the moment per se, with its semblance made visible, cannot have anything dramatic in it. (Sternberger and Neugroschel 1977, 8)

The panorama of the 19th century thus anticipated not only the architecture of public film viewing, the cinemas and movie houses of the 20th century, but also the spaces of presentation and creation of much expanded cinema, late 20th century immersive media art, and the black boxes of digital experimentation of recent years.

When Sternberger described how the panorama took the visitor into another time, usually a very specific moment in a battle,¹³¹ as well as into another place, he made connections to developments, concurrent to those of the visualisation technologies of the panorama, in transportation technology, their ability to rapidly displace the traveller. The programme we saw in the Krugovaya Kinopanorama showed the exotic and far flung regions and cultures of the Soviet Union, but

131 According to the website, the Borodino Panorama depicts the "decisive episode" of the battle between the French and Russian armies taking place at 10.30 a.m. on September 7, 1812.

it also insisted on the modes of transportation being developed at the time of its filming in the mid twentieth-century. We were "transported" to distant regions on newly built motorways and whisked through new urban developments along flowing boulevards. The apparatus used in the making of these films, eleven cameras mounted on a central armature, lent itself to be attached to a vehicle to produce dynamic travelling shots. In one of the programmes, the viewer experiences the sensation of floating through the air as the multi-camera device is suspended from an airborne helicopter flying over Siberia. The Kinopanorama was both a showcase for recent developments in motion picture technologies and in transportation infrastructure, the two developments being ideologically and aesthetically intertwined.¹³²

Sternberger ends his essay bemoaning the sustainability of painted panoramas and their demise, a phenomenon so popular and influential in the 19th century, yet, already at the time of his writing, disappearing from the cultural landscape of European capitals, the great rolls of meticulously painted canvas disintegrating in museum store-rooms. Indeed, the subject matter of the Panorama Borodino had initially been deemed too imperialistic to be celebrated by the early Soviet regime so that the canvas was mothballed for over forty years until the Russian victories of the Napoleonic wars were reconsidered as being historically important during the Khrushchev era and the panorama was restored and rehoused in a modern rotunda shaped museum built for its display.

Today, the cultural concern identified by Sternberger in 1938 for the demise and disappearance of the panorama paintings in the early 20th century would seem to resurface in the beginning of this century with the dismantling and technological replacement of the film based

132 In *What is Media Archaeology?* Jussi Parikka refers to Anne Friedberg's book, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, making the observation that the mobilised viewer is in fact a very contemporary figure, but one that has developed mostly outside of the history and discourses of cinematic practices. It is with the development of architectures of display that were preceded by the Parisian arcades, written about by Walter Benjamin, that a new form of images was produced to respond to the movement of the consumer spectator. "Indeed, it is less the screen per se than the designed environments and practices which convey 'spatial and temporal mobility' (1993: 12): arcades, department stores and exhibition halls." (Parikka 2012, 26)

panoramas from the 1950s and 1960s. There is a film-based panorama still in operation in a museum in southern China, but none of the circular cinemas erected for the world expositions in Brussels, New York and Montreal remain standing. The original Circle-Vision in Disneyland and its later iteration in Florida's Disney World have both been out of operation for many years. Perhaps there is hope that this technology and experience will not be totally lost as the diligent activities of the society responsible for the maintaining and archiving of the Krugovaya Kinopanorama would attest to.

Sternberger identified the panorama as a new cultural re-imagination of space and time. This imagined form has perpetuated beyond the technological innovations and cultural transformations that were taking place in the 19th and 20th centuries: the cultural reach of an entertainment industry rapidly globalising in the 20th century, the dominance of cinema in the public space and the infiltration of domestic and work spaces through the broadcast technology and later the Internet. The hybrid model of illusion, refined by the purveyors of the painted panorama at the beginning of the industrial age, has morphed into a vacillating array of audio-visual experiences, from the handheld and wearable to the architecturally immersive. Stripped of its cultural affect and of its material base (no longer using pigments and film), the painted panorama has recently been explored as a virtual model for an interactive and participatory space by artists working with digital technologies.

In 2003 Masaki Fujihata produced the installation *Morel's Panorama* using a rotating panoramic camera that captured a live image that was projected back into the circular space of its presentation. The interactive installation reimagined the space and time that it occupied and that was experienced by its spectators in the here and now. The visitors were thus transported into a "mediatised" reimagining of their own time and space. Jussi Parikka writes of Fujihata's piece, "...which takes the nineteenth-century mass medium of panoramic paintings – 360-degree virtual realities of sorts – and, with the help of a panoramic camera, transforms that spatial experience into a software-conditioned projection." (Parikka 2012, 165) Fujihata's work not only responds interactively to the viewer within the scope of the images he projects, but is augmented by input from the communities where the

work is produced. Thus the immersive experience, conditioned by algorithmic software logic, is a shared one, both in its reception and in its production.

The immersive, panoramic form has persisted in art as an area for aesthetic and perceptual investigation as Fujihata's practice attests to.¹³³ The resonance of 19th century technological developments is still felt in much media work made today. These technologies still shape much of our imagined and social urban landscape. I am thinking here of the ways in which cities remain divided and managed by the course of railway lines imposed on the urban fabric in the 19th century, a far-reaching (in time and space) technology that, according to Sternberger, led to the development, production and implantation of the painted panorama.

The Krugovaya Kinopanorama (in the condition it was in when we visited it in 2010) represents one iteration of the panorama's development, an iteration that has seen its cultural (ideological) and social functions shifted from projecting a future to preserving the apparatus and media of a lost future past.

The panorama has been rediscovered and "re-forgotten" as the cycle persists of new technologies of image reproduction becoming available to artists and then becoming obsolete or unworkable. One instance of an "inverted panorama" apparatus, the *vidéothéâtre* was developed and used in Montreal and then subsequently abandoned as the conditions for independent moving image production and distribution changed.

The *vidéothéâtre*

The *Vidéographe* (in French *Le vidéographe*) was conceived as a democratic apparatus of rapid production, dissemination and discussion of independent video works. In November 1971 the centre opened in

133 The virtual panorama is being developed for military simulation purposes and for museum and archaeological research among other applications. Jeffrey Shaw, a pioneer in virtual art forms has recently worked in China creating virtual reconstructions of precious archaeological sites, allowing visitors to experience these without threatening their fragile condition. His work *Pure Land 360* (2012) in Dunhuang allows visitors to experience a virtual interactive panorama of the nearby ancient Buddhist grotto temples.

a storefront on rue St-Denis in the Quartier Latin of Montreal.¹³⁴ The Vidéographe space housed the equipment depot, the offices and editing rooms as well as an innovative screening room known as the *vidéothéâtre* that featured a unique screening arrangement that placed viewers facing each other seated around a central cluster of outward facing video monitors.

I became interested in the *vidéothéâtre* as a model, as an early attempt at reconsidering the space of viewing, and participating in the viewing, of electronic moving image material. This model gains significance when we look at the rapid development of video installation art practices in the 1980s and 1990s and the later incorporation of the cinematic experience into the museums and exhibition spaces of contemporary art in the first decades of the 21st century. It is also an interesting model that allows one to reconsider the proliferation of participatory art practices at the turn of the last century. The *vidéothéâtre* is a prototypical interior architecture, a new spatiotemporal configuration that broke with certain conventions for the public viewing of moving image documents.

Le vidéographe

An experimental project put in place by Robert Forget and other members of the National Film Board of Canada, the Vidéographe proposed

¹³⁴ The location was in the heart of the francophone intellectual and cultural milieu of Montreal at that time. The National Film Board (NFB) of Canada, like many federal cultural institutions in the country including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and to a lesser extent the Canada Council for the Arts, administered and funded francophone and anglophone activities separately. While the Vidéographe was funded by the *Office National du Film* (the francophone division of the NFB) as a cultural initiative for the French speaking community, it was, according to Robert Forget, its founding member, open to any interested participant regardless of the language they wished to work in. The early 1970s was a politically charged moment internationally, but particularly in Montreal where a strong, radical movement for the independence of the province of Quebec was very active. In October of 1970, a militant faction of this movement, the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ), carried out an attack in which a Quebec politician was killed. Political tension ensued and the federal government briefly declared martial law and detained many participants in Quebec's intellectual and cultural milieus. According to Robert Forget, the Vidéographe was for some time under covert surveillance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). When Forget was able to finally question the police as to why they chose to watch the Vidéographe, he was told that they were under orders to keep an eye on any location frequented by men with beards.

a new structure for the rapid production and distribution of independent films using the, then new, possibilities of portable video recording. Clément Lafite writes of the effect of the Portapak (Sony's affordable portable video recording system released in 1965) on the socially engaged independent filmmaking communities of the early 1970s. He explains how the portable device's affordability and capacity to record sound synchronised with the moving image sparked a craze among small budget moving image producers in the late 1960s, including Forget, who requested and obtained financing from the National Film Board in 1969 to purchase this equipment. Lafite wrote: "A great interest emerged for the Portapak, for its low cost and its capability to record synchronised sound. In 1969, Robert Forget, of the Groupe de Recherches Sociales, discovered this tool and proposed to the Office National du Film to purchase it." (Lafite 2014, my translation)

The Vidéographe was open 24 hours a day and granted free access to anyone who wished to produce a video there. Clément Lafite wrote:

The beginnings of the Vidéographe were very promising; open 24 hours a day, the centre provided for anyone wishing to take on a project, amateur or professional, a range of equipment and an alternative means of distribution. Video cameras could be borrowed, editing rooms were available, with the possibility of using the 'éditomètre,' an in-house invention that allowed for the synchronisation of sound and image. (Lafite 2014, my translation)

There were no restrictions based on nationality or language of production, (both sometimes criteria in access to other publicly funded film and video production centres in Canada). Forget recently recounted to me over the phone that he remembers a group of women coming up from New York in the early 1970s to produce a documentary on lesbian politics, something unheard of at the time. (Forget 2013) Along with free access to recording and post-production equipment, there were also productions financed by the Vidéographe; many successful Canadian film directors, including Denys Arcand, Charles Binamé and Pierre Falardeau had some of their first works produced through the centre.

Linked to experiments in *télévision communautaire* (community television) at the time, the mandate of the Vidéographe was the democratisation of the moving image as a form of communication, not just its production, but also its dissemination. The emergence of video production centres in Canada in the 1970s was, in part, driven by a willingness to open up the production and distribution of media content to a larger, more inclusive group of participants. In this aspect, it figures in the genealogy of the early days of the Internet with many of its first users, espousing the democratic ideology of the counterculture, expecting that the content and form of the World Wide Web to reflect a large representative section of the (global) population. The limits of the Vidéographe's success in reaching a larger public are reflected in its failure to fundamentally change the media landscape in Quebec and Canada. Likewise, the emancipatory development of the World Wide Web and the Internet has ultimately reflected the limitations of the economic power structure that they were built in. Eric Kluitenberg writes about this failure in his essay, "On the Archaeology of Imaginary Media."

One of the great promises of the early public phase of the Internet as an egalitarian (low-bandwidth) communication space was the idea that communicative relations were nominalized by the limitations of the technology in a way that would more easily establish equal relations within that communication space and more easily allow for bridging differences in race, gender, age, social class, and culture. In short, communication with the "other" would be greatly facilitated in this nominalized communication environment. The rapid differentiation of types of connectivity, not least in terms of differing bandwidth, the reinstatement of cultural and social patterns, the investment of commercial interests, and local forms of regulation have all shifted this image back in the direction of the existing social formation we can witness off-line. (Kluitenberg 2011, 60-61)

In the early 1970s, the Vidéographe attempted to access a popular communication space by having some of the works produced at the

centre made available to a cable TV audience.¹³⁵ While the cable TV project never succeeded in reaching a large, diverse audience,¹³⁶ the *vidéothéâtre* performed a vital function making the work accessible for public viewing; beyond the dissemination of independent productions into people's homes, the Vidéographe's in-house screening room would have performed a vital function making the work accessible in a shared public viewing set-up.

The history and legacy of the Vidéographe as an early experiment in independent video production has been documented and reflected upon many times. Several of the works produced in its early days are still shown and figure prominently in the history of Québécois and Canadian video art. In the 1990s the centre obtained important funding to re-master many of the productions that, until then, were only available on the unstable 1/2 inch reels of their production.¹³⁷ Later public funding in the 2000s allowed for the implementation of the Vithèque platform and the online distribution of much of the historical material.

135 For a brief time, the Vidéographe even experimented with the narrowcast transmission of independent productions in the Quebec town of St-Jérôme. The experiment that was eventually shut down by the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission as access to the airwaves for television and radio transmission is heavily restricted in Canada and under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

136 Clément Lafite notes that although the Vidéographe's pioneering experiments in cable casting of independent video productions was a commendable cultural and technological innovation, the limitations of the potential audience (affluent households with cable television service in selected communities) ran contrary to the centre's mandate for the democratisation of the content produced; the cable casted productions were not available to the, mostly urban, poorer communities in Montreal. The storefront location of the *vidéothéâtre* in the city's centre would have seemed to answer better the criteria for accessibility to a broader public. "While this experiment had success in the short term, Sélectovision put limits on the Vidéographe mandate; as the operation had to be carried out in areas that access to cable television, it excluded the population living outside of the large urban centres." (Lafite 2014, my translation)

137 The lengthy process of re-mastering the archived tapes was followed by making the historical work available to the public. Claude Paré, in an article for the Quebec cinema magazine *Séquences* mentions the launching of the newly available Vidéographe archives in 1994. "To celebrate their 23 years of existence and to find new audiences, in 1994 the Vidéographe organised *les mardis du documentaire indépendant* (Independent Documentary Tuesdays) and opened up their video archives on the boulevard Saint-Laurent during the event «La troisième fenêtre» (The Third Window). The database of the video archives was launched on this occasion. It contained tapes produced between 1970 and 1976 including: an experimental video by Charles Binamé, a video essay on the police by Pierre Falardeau and Julien Poulin, feminist works, socially engaged works, experimental, psychedelic narratives, etc..." (Paré 1994, 18, my translation)

While many examples of the early work produced at the Vidéographe have been remembered and commemorated, the conditions of their original presentation and reception were either poorly or not at all documented, or the documentation itself was poorly archived. As the principle actors of the original Vidéographe project have moved on, information on the activities that took place there and on the centre's original infrastructure are becoming lost in hearsay and rumour.

I was only made aware of the unique concept of the *vidéothéâtre* when I showed the documentary *Vidéographe, vu et par* (René Roberge, 1992) to my students in the 1990s. This work is a compilation of extracts of videos produced and distributed by the centre in its first twenty years. It was made while the project of re-mastering the tapes in the archives was being completed – a project of electronically rescuing this archive also brought to light its existence and gave new life to its contents.

An extract from the video *Sélectovision / Éditomètre / Entrée en scène* (Vidéographe, 1972) is included in Roberge's compilation. This video within a video is one of the only views into the original Vidéographe space, including the *vidéothéâtre*, I have been able to find.¹³⁸ It is a guided tour led by Forget who explains the physical characteristics and workings of the centre and its screening room.

The documents are all produced with portable equipment like the one we are using to make this recording. And once their recording is finished, the people come to the Vidéographe to edit it. Once the editing is finished, they do the sound mix in the little sound studio on the third floor. And, finally, the document is presented in the *vidéothéâtre*.

138 The only printed image I have found of the *vidéothéâtre* space accompanied Daniel Carrière's article "*Petite histoire du vidéothéâtre*" in *Cinébulles* Vol. 10, No. 4, 1991. Interestingly this image shows the screening room bisected by a wall leaving it as a rectangular space, the cluster of monitors forming a semi-circle. Whether this was an earlier or a later configuration of the space depicted in the video (which clearly shows a circular cluster of six monitors), I cannot ascertain. When I interviewed Robert Forget in 2013, he claimed that the *vidéothéâtre* space was not physically altered during the Vidéographe's occupation of the rue St. Denis storefront location.

Here we find a few people watching some recordings they have made, not through the Vidéographe, but through external means. And these people are watching these recordings here in the *vidéothéâtre*. The theatre is a circular screening room with 115 seats surrounding six televisions suspended from the ceiling. It is a screening room that allows for the discussions that happen very often after the screenings. (Forget 1972, my translation)

Precedents

As part of his research into new forms of public video presentation, Robert Forget travelled to New York before launching the Vidéographe to visit the Channel One video theatre, a showcase for the satirical "Channel One Underground Television" productions.¹³⁹ Forget claims the configuration of the *vidéothéâtre* was unique in its time, but certainly the set up with three monitors suspended from the ceiling of Channel One's television theatre would seem to have been an inspiration for the cluster of centrally suspended monitors of the *vidéothéâtre*. (Forget 2013)

What Channel One's television theatre did do was to have audiences watch (pre-recorded) TV in a group at scheduled screening times (like at a cinema or in a conventional theatre). In this manner the members of the audience interacted with each other in their response to the gags and skits shown on the monitors. Comedy (which Channel One produced and showed) would seem to require a kind of contagious group laughter in order to be seen as being funny. I think Forget also wanted to encourage a kind of collective response to the videos that would be shown in the *vidéothéâtre*. The, perhaps radical, step that Forget took was to place the viewers in a 360-degree circle around the monitors. With this configuration, the audiences not only watched and reacted to the video programme being shown, but they watched and reacted to each other. Forget states in his commentary to the video *Entrée en scène* that the arrangement favours

139 Information and documentation of the Channel One Video Theater project, is provided on the homepage of Lane Sarahsohn, one of the theatre's founders. (<http://www.lanesarahsohn.com/twwriter/channel1.html>, consulted October 20, 2014)

discussion (*"est propice à la discussion,"* Forget, 1972), but the unique layout of the screening room was also due to more practical circumstances. Forget later explained to me that one of the challenges of the *vidéothéâtre* was that the space consigned to it was square. (Forget 2013) Cinemas are traditionally rectangular with the screen at the small end. Forget solved the problem of a symmetrical room by placing the screens in its centre.

The *vidéothéâtre's* circular form recalls historical theatrical and entertainment architecture, (coliseums, circuses, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, etc.) but also configurations inherent to histories (and futures) of moving image presentation and interaction. Wanda Strauven, in "The Observer's Dilemma: To Touch or Not to Touch," links game playing to early forms of moving image apparatuses, optical toys which like the *vidéothéâtre* were based on circular modes of viewing. Strauven refers to the thaumatrope, a simple two-handed device incorporating a disc that one spins to create the illusion of a composite image.

It consists of a small cardboard disk and two pieces of string attached at opposite sides of its contour. The observer can spin the disk by first twirling one piece of string and then holding and gently pulling both strings. The rotation or "turning" (*trope*) is necessary to perceive the "wonder" (*thauroma*) of how two separate images, drawn on each side of the disk, melt into one image. The faster the rotation, the better the illusion. (Strauven 2011, 150)

While the circularity of the *vidéothéâtre* is apparent in its viewing apparatus, the circular cluster of monitors in the room's centre, the effect of the circularity is mostly felt in the shared reception of, and participation in, the work shown. Strauven proposes that participation, in the form of game playing, is embodied in the potentiality of moving image presentation (indeed the early cinema of attractions very much offered a participatory collective viewing experience), but was denied to the movie house going audience of conventional cinema much of the twentieth-century. She refers to a scene in Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* (2004) when the characters play a game in which they

quiz each other on film trivia. Strauven suggests the viewer in the cinema of such a scene would feel the frustration of not being able to participate in the quiz. She posits that the domestic emancipation of the video tape recorder and the home viewing of films once again allowed the spectator to participate in the movies and play games with each other and the material being watched.

At the movie theater, any cinephile spectator is undoubtedly incited by such a (cinephile) game, which, however, cannot be joined physically but can only be watched at a safe distance and played silently, on one's own. At home, on the contrary, in the new setting of the surround home cinema, the quiz can be played with other players, that is, one's friends or family members. One can pause the film for reflection time, touch the screen to point out a certain detail, repeat a scene (one-self or by means of the replay button), and, eventually, also really imitate (instead of pretending to play) the main characters and reenact one's own favorite film scenes. (Strauven 2011, 160)

Almost ten years before the commercialisation of the home VCR, the *vidéothéâtre* would have offered a proto-participatory viewing experience to a video audience. Importantly, the level of participation would be greater than that of viewers of pre-recorded cinema as the *vidéothéâtre* audience could all potentially be producers of the material presented.

Wanda Strauven's prescription for a participatory collective viewing experience in the home, a prescription filled by the VCR's (limited) interactive possibilities, would recall the use of home movie devices in family viewing settings. These were quite common after the launching of the 16mm Ciné-Kodak camera system in the 1920s. The "home movie" phenomenon found its apogee in the 1960s and 1970s with the development of the Super 8 system.¹⁴⁰ The films, often silent, would be watched in a family setting with commentary and discussion among the

140 Interestingly, the "home movie" phenomenon migrated to the VCR system during the 1980s. The participatory nature of watching home movies on video perhaps influencing the way other material was viewed at home.

family taking place during and after the screening. The simple viewing apparatus allowed for films to be replayed or even played in reverse or in accelerated movement; there was, in a family setting, a possibility for experimentation with the the medium, a possibility that informed future artists who would be working in moving image media. The domestic setting for participatory viewing may have been a model for the viewing conditions of the *vidéothéâtre*, but the screening room in the Vidéographe literally distanced itself from the home consumption of media paradigm. The *vidéothéâtre* was a public space; located at street level of a busy artery, anyone could wander off the street and participate in the screenings taking place there. The open, engaged, democratic model espoused by the Vidéographe ran counter to the familial insularity that the “home” represented in the Quebec of the 1970s.

Expo 67

Four years before the Vidéographe opened, Montreal hosted the 1967 world’s fair. As with many world expositions, innovative forms of moving image presentation were showcased. The Telephone pavilion featured *Canada ’67* (Robert Barclay, 1967), a 9-screen 360-degree circular film production. The film was produced by Walt Disney using the Circle-Vision 360° technique, first used in Disneyland in 1955. *Canada ’67* is a panorama of material shot highlighting the natural and cultural variety of the different regions of the federation. As with the Krugovaya Kinopanorama in Moscow, the synchronised films are projected over the heads of the audience. The film surrounds the spectators who are standing in the centre of the room. Their gaze is directed outwards. Like with the configuration of its projection apparatus which placed viewers in the centre of the circular cinema, the Telephone pavilion, located in a large city in the cultural centre of the country, surrounded viewers with scenes of rural Canada and its distant regions. In this way the content of *Canada ’67* echoed those of many of the films shown at Krugovaya Kinopanorama that presented the diversity of landscapes and cultures of the different republics that made up the Soviet Union.

In the *vidéothéâtre*, the film (video) is in the centre of the room with the spectators sitting around it. Their gaze is directed inwards towards

the screens and towards each other. Somehow the content of the work shown is reflected in the apparatus of its presentation. The videos produced at the Vidéographe in the beginning of the 1970s looked at social and economic situations in Montreal and in other parts of the French-speaking province of Quebec. These were often low or no budget productions and the situations were recounted through individual testimonies spoken into the camera. There is an intimate directness to the best of these productions, a looking into, that was reflected in the inward gaze of the viewers in the *vidéothéâtre*.¹⁴¹

Immersive qualities are not limited to media art installations. The interest in installation art that developed out of minimal sculpture in the 1970s and 1980s was driven, in part, by a desire to involve corporeal perception as a means of experiencing an artwork. Robert Irwin has been doing this with his labyrinthine architectures of gauze and fluorescent lighting, playing with the viewer’s sense of direction and depth perception as they wander through works like *Excursus: Homage to the Square*³ (1998-2015). There is however a particularity to the immersive capacity of media art installations, perhaps influenced by what Claire Bishop refers to as the “enthralment with the ‘surroundings’ of cinema.” (Bishop 2005, 95) Robert Smithson noted how going to watch a film in a cinema results in an “immobilization of the body” (Smithson 1996, 138) In “A cinematic atopia,” he writes of watching a film: “We are lost between the abyss within us and the boundless horizon outside us.” (Smithson 1996, 141) It is to Smithson’s approach in his work that one may look to understand his awareness of the immersive qualities of film projection. Smithson’s earthwork *Spiral Jetty* (1970) was built on a scale that permitted viewers to walk along it, thus immersing them in the work, in its striking juxtaposition of earth, water and sky. Smithson also made another *Spiral Jetty*, a film showing

141 One particularly successful work produced at the Vidéographe in its early days was Pierre Falardeau’s *Continuons le combat* (Keep Up the Fight) (1971). Falardeau used his own voice in his video, a work that showed clips of professional wrestlers. The voice-over compared the desperate struggle of the wrestlers (who at that time were often French Canadian) with the struggles of the French-speaking minority within Canadian society. The disturbing intimacy of Falardeau’s voice, his use of the local dialect and intonation to speak directly to the viewer, functioned as a counterpoint to the violent and spectacular mediated images of the wrestlers.

the production of the earthwork of the same name, but also manifesting Smithson's preoccupations in a medium very different from the earth, salt and water of his monument in the Great Salt Lake. Smithson saw his films as independent artworks. He dreamt up and designed dedicated screening rooms for them, underground, on a ferry in New York harbour or in an abandoned mine, thus recognising and building on his films' intrinsic immersive qualities. "What I would like to do is build a cinema in a cave or an abandoned mine, and film the process of its construction. That film would be the only film shown in the cave." (Smithson 1996, 142)

The immersive and panoramic cinema models have had an important and traceable influence on the apparatuses of media art presentation. In a previous chapter, I mention how the Montreal media artist Luc Courchesne talks of the experience of Expo 67 as a child inspiring him to develop his panoramic works and the immersive space of the Satsosphere, an immersive dome developed by the artist. The cultural legacy of the *vidéothéâtre* (as an apparatus of presentation) is less evident. I would however insist on the relevance of the *vidéothéâtre* in relation to the history of artists' video and in recent contemporary art exhibition.

Closed circuits

Interestingly, although the work produced at the Vidéographe in the early 1970s was of a mostly documentary and socially engaged nature, the form, and the conception, of the *vidéothéâtre* would today seem more sensitive to tendencies in experimental film and video making. The public (and I am presuming often the authors) would sit around the cluster of monitors attached to the viewing room's ceiling. Thus while they watched the video, they also watched each other and were aware of being watched. Here, the narcissistic characteristic of early artists' video, identified by Rosalind Krauss in her 1976 essay, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" would come into play.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Rosalind Krauss posited in her seminal essay that more than in other forms of visual art, in video art the body (at once of the artist and or the viewer) is an inherent characteristic of the medium. "Unlike the other visual arts, video is capable of recording and transmitting at the same time producing instant feedback. The body is therefore as it

If we look at much of the artists' explorations with video at this time in the United States and in Europe we see an investigation of the closed circuit functions of the medium. In the case of Dan Graham, his early video experiments would result in installations and performances combining live or delayed video feeds with large mirrors reflecting back into the space of presentation.

In Dan Graham's *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974), the viewer enters a closed room. One wall is lined with mirrors. On the facing wall is a video camera above a video monitor. The monitor shows a "closed circuit" feed from the camera. It shows what the camera is catching, but with an eight second delay. The viewer thus sees himself or herself entering the frame eight seconds earlier. As the camera also captures the mirror and the monitor in the mirror; receding images in the monitor show the scene progressively earlier in time, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, etc. seconds earlier. The effect of seeing oneself in the past is destabilising to the viewer as the mirrored image of the self is severed from the temporality of the present. The experience of participating in this work is a disturbing one of self-consciously seeing oneself in the mirrors and on the monitors, but also of watching others (and being watched by others). Dan Graham developed his practice into the building of functioning architectural pavilions. Among these, he conceived of a series of video viewing rooms, some used by museums to show their video art collections.

Reflecting contemporary international experiments in media art, there was more formal experimentation in the *vidéothéâtre* beyond the centre's mandate of accessibility, a rapid production and dissemination process and opportunity for discussion. According to Forget, there was the possibility to display different images on the different monitors and to synchronise these using the control track from one VTR to programme the other. (Forget 2013) This means that some of the first experiments in multi-channel video installation using pre-recorded sources were made in the *vidéothéâtre*. It also shows that Forget and some of the Vidéographe producers were very aware of the

were centered between two machines that are the opening and closing of a parenthesis. The first of these is the camera; the second is the monitor, which re-projects the performer's image with the immediacy of a mirror." (Krauss 1986, 52)

importance and the new creative possibilities of the apparatus, (*le dispositif*, as Anne-Marie Duguet, borrowing a term from Michel Foucault, would call it later), of video presentation.¹⁴³

A strong emphasis was placed on audio post-production for video, audio production and also experiments with audio playback at the Vidéographe. On the upper floor of the centre there was a sound studio, called *Le sonographe*, where videomakers could post dub their productions, but also where experimentation with sound recording and playback, early forays into electro acoustic music, were practiced. The *vidéothéâtre* also played a role in this experimentation with sound playback and treatment. The screening room was equipped with a rudimentary quadraphonic sound system. As I understand the system, it worked by synchronising two videotape players and using the stereo soundtracks from the second player to provide the additional two tracks of sound to accompany the video and stereo soundtrack from the first player. Forget remembers this kind of setup being used during retrospective screenings and “video festivals” held in the *vidéothéâtre*. (Forget 2013)¹⁴⁴ In an interview with Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, curator of the exhibition *MONTREAL TAPES: Video as a Community or Political Tool*, held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1978, Forget explains that the initial idea behind the *vidéothéâtre* was that it would serve as a multi-media platform for diverse art forms including theatre and poetry. They initiated many activities including inviting the American beat poet Allen Ginsberg to Montreal to do a multi-screen video performance in the *vidéothéâtre*. The community using the Vidéographe was, however, lukewarm to the idea of working in multi-media; they were more interested in doing what Forget referred to as “electronic filmmaking” and using the Vidéographe’s home-made editing system.

143 In her 1988 essay “*Dispositifs*,” Anne-Marie Duguet posits the apparatus (*le dispositif*), and not the image as the locus of the video art paradigm. Following on conceptual artists’ reluctance to produce more images, the video artist would, according to Duguet, be interested only in the process (of recording, producing and perceiving) rather than in the images this process might generate. (Duguet 1988, 226)

144 Robert Forget also remembers a screening in the *vidéothéâtre* of Pierre Falardeau’s *Continuons le Combat*, (1971) when the sound system broke down and the director continued playing the video, doing a live voiceover of the narration like a barker in a silent movie projection. (Forget 2013)

When we set up Vidéographe, the theatre was set up as multi-media. We coaxed, I don’t know, how many ... working in our theatre and video. We had a few plays, you know, at the very beginning at Vidéographe, but it didn’t catch on. We paid a lot of money to have Allen Ginsberg, the poet from San Francisco. He was doing multi-screen video. We paid his voyage, supplied all the facilities. We set up a multi-screen presentation which we kept for two weeks. We continued to have projects – we ran it continuously, and not a single proposal using multi-screen. We tried. Vidéographe was set up with quadrophonic sound at the very beginning. The first programme publicly shown at Vidéographe contained a five minute video feed-back with quadraphonic sound. We tried to push it as a multi-media environment, experimental, but at the same time that we were setting it up in this fashion, we also did a lot of technical research to solve the problems of editing on ½” – and we succeeded. And that was the area where everybody jumped in. At one point, it became so evident that we didn’t push as hard as we had for the multi-media approach, and that’s why Vidéographe became sort of a form of electronic cinema, or a form of electronic filmmaking. (Forget 1978, 4)

After the world exposition in Montreal in 1967, where the National Film Board occupied the very successful Labyrinth pavilion,¹⁴⁵ there was much discussion in the board as to how to continue being innovative in film production and presentation, and whether to create more cinematic pavilions for upcoming world expositions. Forget was, it seemed, more interested in the development of what he called *le petit écran*, the development of television and video as a community tool. As part of the Vidéographe project, he came up with systems of

145 Judith Shatnoff in her article “Expo 67: A Multiple Vision” suggests that multi-screen techniques, which she found particularly effective in the Labyrinth pavilion, could challenge the accepted “monovision” approach to storytelling of conventional cinema. “It is the multi-screen presentation that forces us to see contrast and to go beyond, to make those paradoxical connections, perhaps because we can absorb contrasts-even contradictions-one after the other without distress, but when they are presented simultaneously we tend to correlate; we seek a common denominator; our instinct is for order.” (Shatnoff 1967, 11)

cable and micro broadcast TV in smaller Quebec municipalities showing the productions of the centre as well as films produced at the NFB and by Télé Québec.

The end of the *vidéothéâtre*

After Forget ended his tenure as director of the Vidéographe in 1975, he went back to the NFB to resume another project that he had begun in 1968 involving the narrowcasting of NFB productions from their studios to selected recipients. In the 1980s, the NFB used the fibre optic cables in Montreal to “stream” films to receivers in the city’s universities. (Forget 2013) The culmination of this research into video on demand resulted in the launching in 1993 of the Cinérobotèque. In a building that also housed an NFB cinema, there was a médiathèque where visitors could consult individually, on video monitors, a selection of the Board’s productions. The innovation of this video library was that the viewer selected the film he or she wanted to watch using an electronic interface and the videocassette of the chosen film was then selected from a depository and placed in a VCR by a robotic arm. The Cinérobotèque, which was to be found in a building a block away from the original Vidéographe, was closed down by the Film Board in 2012.

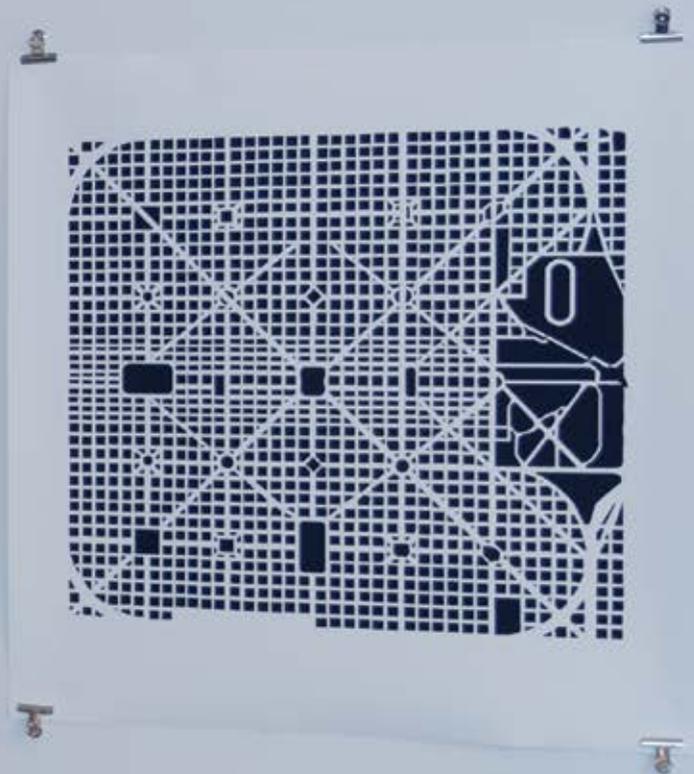
The Vidéographe ran into financial and administrative difficulties in 1975. It shut down for a brief period and Forget eventually moved on to other projects. As a non-profit organisation, the centre was allowed to hold bingos to pay off its debts and raise money for operating. They did quite well with these and raised enough money to buy the building where they are still operating on rue Garnier in the Plateau Mont-Royal borough of Montreal.

The *vidéothéâtre* was not reinstalled in the new premises. It seemed that after the departure of Robert Forget the mandate of the centre had shifted towards documentary productions and *vidéo engagé*, and these forms would not be benefited from such a radical form of screening room.¹⁴⁶ A more cinema-like room was installed in

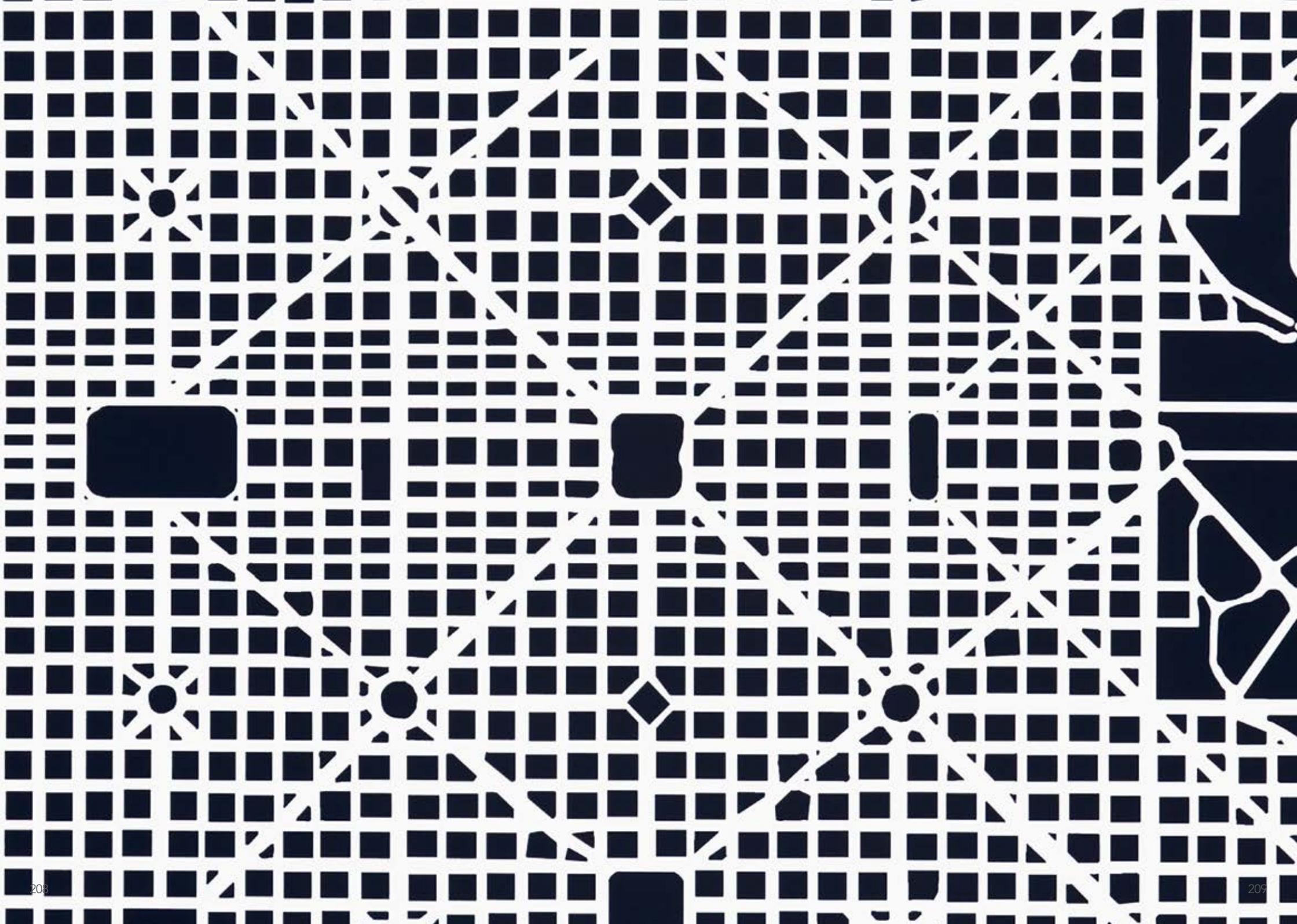
¹⁴⁶ In 1977 the Vidéographe had reopened and Forget was still involved in the administration of the centre. They had all ready, at that time, planned a new direction that was

the rue Garnier building with several rows of (comfortable) seats all facing in one direction towards one or more monitors on stands. It was in this room that I held one of the first screenings of my video work in 1989.

based on distribution and archiving independent Quebec video productions. In an interview with Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker in 1977, Forget explained the new approach. “We have a proposal right now in front of the Canada Council, and if the response is good I think we will start rebuilding and re-vamping Vidéographe but with a new approach and with emphasis on consultation and distribution. We will not put the same emphasis as we did in the beginning on production for the simple reason that there are so many new machines around. We will put the emphasis on post-production – editing, putting on sound-track, and primarily distribution. We will also transform Vidéographe more into a library putting the emphasis on people coming around, dropping in. We set up facilities for screening and we plan to make Vidéographe a place where most of the Quebec video productions will be deposited – a centre for consultation. So it will be a place where you go and have the chance to see almost all the tapes.” (Forget 1978, 7)







Chapter six
A PRACTICE

Building spaces

Making video and sound installations that both represented and were inserted within urban space, a practice that is rooted in an experimentation with the technologies and presentation techniques of the moving image in architectural space,¹⁴⁷ has led me to undertake a reconsideration of the relationship between the individual and the architecture and urban space which he or she negotiates.¹⁴⁸ Beyond its aesthetic and physical characteristics, built space resonates into historical, cultural and social spheres, into memory.

In 2010, I produced and exhibited a video installation for three projectors entitled *Monuments*. Each of the three projections showed a different “monument” in Montreal; images of Tore Björnstad’s Maison Radio-Canada, Roger Taillibert’s Olympic stadium and the former United States pavilion from Expo 67, Buckminster Fuller’s Biosphere, were projected. I filmed the buildings with a Super 8 camera. I placed the camera on a tripod, framed and focussed my subject and shot the complete footage of the Super 8 cartridge without moving the camera. The 3:20 minute clips were then transferred to DVD for the gallery presentation.

I used Super 8 film to produce moving images of the structures that could take these images outside of the time when they were produced,¹⁴⁹ to place the buildings in temporal suspension between

147 Many of the spaces designed for moving image presentation often embodied a collective desire to reconsider and reconstruct the accepted cinematic models of movie presentation and viewing. These former spaces of moving image presentation lend themselves to an investigation informed by concepts of media archaeology.

148 The development of minimal art (and particularly minimal sculpture) in North America in the 1960s frames my research into “walking around” urban and architectural space. The works produced by the artists associated with this movement, Carl André, Donald Judd, Sol Lewitt, Robert Morris, as well as many of their contemporaries operated on the affirmation that viewers were mobile, that their active physical and perceptual presence would engage in an on-going interaction with the material and phenomenological presence of the artwork. This mobility of the viewer emphasised the (architectural) space in which the work was to be shown and brought it in as part of the work. Michael Fried published in *Artforum* his now famous essay, “Art and Objecthood.” In it Fried wrote about the theatricality of minimal art. Lacking “presentness” a minimal sculpture could not be understood as an aesthetic entity unto itself, but needed the physical and perceptual interaction with the spectator to be complete. (Fried 1998, 125)

149 The Super 8 ciné film format was launched in 1965. It was widely used in the 1960s and 1970s for amateur and family films and was quickly adopted by artists, some of whom

the dates of their construction in the 1960s and 1970s and the years I filmed them in the late 2000s.¹⁵⁰ The instability of the grainy projected images referred to a possible deterioration (in the public consciousness) of the function of the architecture shown.¹⁵¹ These buildings were all built as monuments to the dissemination of spectacle, as broadcast media (Maison Radio-Canada), as idealised live sport (Olympic Stadium), and as the nation state put on display (United States pavilion). As a comment on media obsolescence, *Monuments* presents and remembers the fact of “becoming” obsolete of the architectures of technological media spectacle and dissemination. By using Super 8 film to document these structures, I am appropriating them for my own urban reverie and returning them to their mythical, imagined potential.

City planning

Beyond the forgotten potential of architectural projects and the obsolete promises of dead media, there is the city in which these paradigms operate, itself an unfinished project. I became interested in a city that existed as a plan, as an abstract geometrical pattern, before it existed as a place with a history. The plan of the planned city is the utopia projected before the potential failures of engineering, architecture and technology can take effect.¹⁵² I made *Plan* (2011), a plan

are still using it today, as it was relatively inexpensive to work with and because of its “other world” image rendition, its grainy texture and over saturated palette, appealed to many of them aesthetically. I produced and exhibited several works in Super 8 as an undergraduate fine arts student.

150 While the Super 8 images of the buildings ostensibly could have been shot in the 1970s, (the film stock available in 2008 being very similar to 1970s stock), there were details in the shots, the flow of traffic, vegetation growth, and the urban development that indicated that the films were shot at a much later date.

151 The Olympic Stadium is used infrequently for sporting events, but no major league franchise has played regularly scheduled games there since the Montreal Expos moved to Washington D.C. The Maison Radio-Canada, built for Radio-Canada and the CBC is the Quebec headquarters of a public broadcaster that has seen its funding cut and listenership decline, struggling to compete with private broadcasters and Internet based services. The transparent acrylic skin geodesic dome of the United States pavilion caught fire in 1976 and was never replaced.

152 Modern, planned, communities, particularly housing estates built in American inner cities in the 1950s and 1960s, have often been seen as being synonymous with catastrophic social failure. Minoru Yamasaki’s Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis is emblematic of this perceived failure. Completed in 1956, “a racially segregated,

of the city La Plata in Argentina,¹⁵³ originally drawn up in 1880, and reproduced as a digital drawing. By redrawing the city plan, I wanted to return the place to a concept, to an idea before it became a city for people to live and work in. I was interested in the potential that this plan presented by reconsidering a city as a possibility, but was also aware of the dangers in reducing the collective lived experience that a city contains to an abstract pattern, much like how an aerial photograph or a satellite image will efface and aestheticize the untidy realities of everyday urban life.¹⁵⁴

The representation of a grid based urban structure was also explored in the installation exhibited with *Plan* at the Galleria Huuto in Helsinki in May 2011. The photo installation *Untitled (streets)* (2011) comprised seven digital frames each showing a single photo of empty streets in the old centre of Buenos Aires. Whereas *Plan* presented the

middle-class complex of 33 11-storey towers,” was partially demolished through a planned, mediated, implosion in 1972 and razed fully in 1976. Colin Marshall wrote of the social failure of the housing estate in *The Guardian* in 2015, “Whether you call Pruitt-Igoe’s short, troubled existence a failure of architecture, a failure of policy, or a failure of society, its fate remains bound up with, and reflective of, the fate of many American cities in the mid-20th century.” (Marshall 2015)

153 When the province of Buenos Aires was created in the late 19th century, it was to occupy the territory surrounding the Argentine capital, but not the city of Buenos Aires itself. As such, a capital for the new province was to be built next to the small fishing village of La Plata. As was the tendency of the time, an urban planning based on a symmetrical pattern was conceived. This was in part due to an ideal concept for a city; among other features, the symmetrical design of the new city would mean that no dwelling would be situated more than six city blocks from a park.

154 Thomas F. McDonough, writing in 1994 about the *dérive*, the urban drifting practiced by Guy Debord and the *Situationniste internationale* remarks on how these radical social and cultural actors mistrusted the then novel use of the aerial photograph as part of sociologists’ methods to plan and rebuild post-war Paris. Quoting Michel de Certeau, a contemporary influence of the Situationnistes, McDonough writes, “The elevation provided by “the overflight at high altitude” (de Certeau 1984, 92-93) transforms the sociologist into a voyeur of sorts, who not only enjoys the erotics of seeing all from his hidden vantage point, but who also enjoys the erotics of knowing all. The scopic and epistemophilic drives unite in mutually seeking pleasure in the totality of the city as seen in the “vue verticale” (De Certeau 1984, 92-93) of the aerial photograph (or of the *Plan de Paris* for that matter). But this whole is imaginary, a fiction...” (McDonough 1994, 70) McDonough adds that aerial photograph, defended by the sociologist Chombart de Lauwe, among others, for its objective gaze on the city was seen by the *Situationnistes* as another technological tool to render the architecture and geography of urban life as spectacle, “In contrast to Chombart de Lauwe’s faith in the knowledge provided by the spectacularized image of the city as seen in the aerial photograph, they refuted this voyeuristic viewpoint.” (McDonough 1994, 70)

city as a conception, as a project, *Untitled (streets)* presented a similar urban grid as lived-in, functioning, urban architecture

To make the work I positioned myself in the centre of the street so as to have a direct view of the vanishing point where its end would, ideally, meet the horizon. Like many South American cities, the colonial centre of the Argentine capital is laid out on a grid pattern. The ancient Greeks used the grid as a means of harmonising their cities with nature by aligning the streets so that they opened unto views of the surrounding landscape, thus bringing nature into the rationalised matrix of the city. While the modern grid, in Rosalind Krauss's words, "turns its back on nature" (Krauss 1986, 9), the regulated street layouts of ancient Greece were aligned so as to unite the city with its natural surroundings.

The views shown in *Untitled (streets)* provide no perspectives of the countryside surrounding Buenos Aires; as the photos show, the city appears to perpetuate into the distance, an urban agglomeration without end. Presented in the small gallery on a quiet street in Helsinki, far from the urban congestion of the busy port city on the River Plate, the miniature views, slightly larger than postcards, show a faraway city in a faraway land. The apparatus I used for the display of *Untitled (streets)* recalls backlit devices used for looking at souvenir pictures such as the stereo colour slide viewers popular in the latter half of the 20th century.¹⁵⁵

Untitled (streets) presents the urban layout of Buenos Aires as a three dimensional grid framing the city and the sky behind it; the city functions as a viewing apparatus of itself. This work recalls the concept, proposed by Walter Benjamin, that the remodelling of Paris in the 19th century allowed the city itself to "dilate",¹⁵⁶ to become a sublime

155 The View-Master was introduced at the New York World's Fair in 1939 and was a common device with tourists well until the 1980s. As a viewing apparatus, it reworked Edison's kinoscope and the fixed stereo viewers installed in the dioramas and kaiserpanoramas that were popular urban attractions in the 19th century. The View-Master is still marketed at the time of writing this text, mostly as a toy for children to look at stereo images of cartoon characters. ("View-Master Celebrates 65 Years of Pop Culture Through 3-D Magic; Fisher-Price's View-Master Celebrates 65 Years of 3-D Magic," *Business Wire*, [wire feed], July 6, 2004)

156 To Benjamin, 19th century Paris was spectacular and shattered. He writes of the phantasmagoria of space and time that was Haussmann's reconstructed city: the spectacular

spectacle like the views offered to Parisians in the panoramas and dioramas, that had become an attraction in that city (and in other European capitals) in that century, of then exotic and distant landscapes.¹⁵⁷ The potential Benjamin saw in the city for it to dissolve into a cinematic viewing apparatus indirectly informed explorations of the space and architecture of the moving image leading to the expanded configurations of screen, projector and audience that was developed as a film-making practice later in the 20th century.

Expanded image and sound

Experiments in expanded cinema¹⁵⁸ opened up the possibilities for the presentation of projected moving image material beyond the proscenium model of theatrical presentations of films that had been the norm for public screenings since the beginning of the 20th century.

axial vistas of the new boulevards, the demolished quarters that not only housed the working classes but were home to their distinct culture. He also writes of the distinctly 19th century spectacle that was the panorama, a technique that preceded and predicted cinema and brought the sublime landscape of the countryside to the city. Benjamin wrote that in a panorama, the city loses its aura of lived experience dilates and becomes a landscape; it is perceived as a tableau, best seen from a distance, "as it does in a subtler way for the flâneur." (Benjamin 1986, 150)

157 Jonathan Crary in his book *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* describes August Fuhrmann's Kaiserpanorama, first installed in Berlin in 1883 and remarks on its historical and technological significance, "In one sense the history of the Kaiserpanorama belongs within that of the stereoscope and peep show, but its particular structure foreshadows the experience that Edison provided with his Kinetoscope in the early 1890s, that is, an individual viewing station located in a public place, for which a consumer would pay to observe a mechanized series of photographic images. ... The first Kaiserpanorama was about fifteen feet in diameter and could accommodate 25 spectators, who would simultaneously be viewing different stereoscopic images illuminated by 25 small lamps." (Crary 1999, 136)

158 Coined by the American experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek in the 1960s, the term "expanded cinema" has its origins in early avant-garde film experiments of the 1920s and refers to moving image works (film and video) that expand on the relationship between audience and the projected image to engage the conditions and space of viewing. Gene Youngblood's 1970 book, *Expanded Cinema*, developed the concept beyond an opening up of the possibilities of moving image presentation and reception. Youngblood looked towards a total cinema which would become a model for a new, expanded, form of consciousness. "When we say expanded cinema we actually mean expanded consciousness. Expanded cinema does not mean computer films, video phosphors, atomic light, or spherical projections. Expanded cinema isn't a movie at all: like life it's a process of becoming, man's ongoing historical drive to manifest his consciousness outside of his mind, in front of his eyes." (Youngblood 1970, 41)

Multi-screen and immersive projections took the image beyond the confines of the rectangular frame of the movie screen. Projections became spaces and forms rather than images.¹⁵⁹ Earlier experiments in *musique concrète*¹⁶⁰ led to multi-channel, multi-speaker arrangements for a radical spatialisation of recorded and live music. These developments in the *mise-en-espace* of recorded sound and image foreshadowed and accompanied minimal sculpture's engagement of the spectator as mobile subject actively perceiving with body and mind. Much contemporary audio-visual installation work is thus informed by the combination of these movements in the visual arts, cinema and music towards a work that engages the space in which it is installed through light, sound and image and that calls on spectators to perceive it through their bodies moving within and around this space. My work *Automat* (2010) was designed to first engage with gallery visitors as a spatialised aural experience; a random soundtrack "floated" in the exhibition space, the visitors could physically follow it as it travelled from one end of the day-lit gallery to another. They were subsequently invited to enter a darkened space and to remain stationary while watching a repetitive, at times hypnotic, video projection.

Automat is an audio video installation exhibited in two rooms of the Galleria FAFA in 2010. While the work presented a musical interpretation of an architectural space, it also played with the interior architecture of the gallery. The "front" room of the ground floor gallery, windows looking out on the street, was left empty except for four framed

159 The epitome of this development might be the sculptural film installations of the British artist Anthony McCall. *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) is a film of the contours of a white circle being drawn projected into a cloud of fog produced by a smoke machine. In space, the circle takes the form of a cone, its apex at the front of the projector lens.

160 As part of their research into synthesised and electronically controlled sounds, the pioneer composers of *musique concrète* developed early forms of stereophonic and multi-channel playback of recorded material. Daniel Teruggi wrote of the control system tested by Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry for the first time at the premiere performance of the *Symphonie pour un homme seul* at the Salle de l'Empire in Paris in 1951. "This system was used to control dynamics during the performance (music was played from several shellac players) and also to create what was called a 'stereophonic' effect, which actually was a left-right control on the position of a monophonic sound. The organization of the loudspeakers in the hall was quite original too: two loudspeakers were placed at the front right and left sides of the audience; two other loudspeakers completed the distribution – one was placed at the rear, in the middle of the hall and another also placed at the rear, but over the audience." (Teruggi 2007, 218)

etchings hung in one of its corners. Suspended from the ceiling were four speakers playing back what seemed to be a random composition played on chimes. The sound was spatially separated; each speaker played back an independent channel and the sound would travel from one end of the room to another. An open doorway was visible in the wall opposite the entrance. The installation continued in the small, darkened room through this doorway.

Automat looks to spatiotemporal characteristics of urban architecture and its shifting public function to find in these the potential for a musical experience. While the work features an unremarkable site common to most cities in the first decade of this century, the automatic bank teller, the location of the bank in Peter Behrens's Alexanderhaus of Berlin's Alexanderplatz resonates in the modern narrative of architecture and public urban space. The roles that the building and this square (Platz) have played in the shifting cultural and ideological history of the German capital resonate within and beyond the international project that was modernism.¹⁶¹

In the adjoining room, its walls painted black, a nine-minute, colour, anamorphic widescreen video was projected in a loop on the wall to the left of the entrance. A settee was provided for the viewer to watch the work. The sounds of the recorded chimes from the adjacent room were also played back, mixed down onto two channels, in the smaller screening room.¹⁶² These were accompanied by the sounds of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in a busy city square. These sounds were recorded with, and synchronised to, the video image. This showed an unedited static shot looking into a vestibule of the Alexanderhaus; an

161 Exhibited alongside *Automat* in the Galleria FAFA was the photo installation *Untitled (Alexanderplatz)* (2010) that was composed of 84 photographs of the same view of the Alexanderplatz taken on different days at different times. The 60 x 45 cm inkjet prints were mounted on board and arranged in a regular pattern on the wall recalling the grid of the façade of the Alexanderhaus. Whereas *Automat* looked at a sporadic rhythmic architectonic of the cityscape, the sliding doors of an automatic bank teller, *Untitled (Alexanderplatz)* looked at the resilient stillness of some architecture when it is surrounded by the everyday flux of urban movement.

162 The sound of chimes was used as, due in part to its high frequency and pronounced timbre, it stands out from the lower frequency and distortion of everyday urban noise. The sound also refers to the chiming ring of a doorbell, but also, as it is temporally distorted, reversed and slowed down, through digital manipulation, it evokes the tones produced through electronic manipulation in *musique concrète* among other forms of experimental music.

entrance composed of twin sliding glass doors set between two glass panes, filled most of the screen. People were seen passing in front of the vestibule, and entering and exiting from it to access the automatic bank tellers.

As people passed through the entrance, the sliding doors would open and close automatically. The doors' movements were synchronised to the sounds of the chimes (added in post-production). As there were two sets of doors and different chime sounds for the different possible positions the doors could take, the rhythmic and spatial structure of the soundtrack was rendered complex by the multiple permutations of frequency and placement of its elements. Seemingly random, the musical score was in fact determined by people's need to access banking facilities during the nine minutes the recording was made.

Another fluctuating temporality was at play in this work. A few months after the recording was made (in the fall of 2006) the bank moved their automatic tellers to another section of the Alexanderhaus. The setting of the video, the vestibule and the double sliding doors disappeared. While the Alexanderhaus, a protected monument that has endured regime change and bombings (completed in 1932, it was substantially rebuilt in the 1950s and again in the 1990s), exhibits architecture's potential for sustainability and continuity, the activities it houses, shops and financial institutions, are increasingly tenuous operations constantly shifting the physical space they occupy. *Automat* was shot in this paradoxical dichotomy in the urban landscape: the monument (the Alexanderhaus) resistant to change existing within the tenuous fluctuations of a consumer and market based economy and social structure, manifested in the short lived existence of the vestibule housing the automatic tellers.

Writing in 1903, Georg Simmel associated the distant and unfamiliar relationships among urban dwellers with the then burgeoning complex market economy and the abstract exchange of money for goods and services that was beginning to dominate 20th century city life. (Simmel 1971, 328) With *Automat*, I recall the abstract and complex relationships that monetary exchange has brought us, using its manifestations, the movements of people accessing an automatic bank teller, to produce parallel abstractions in a sound work; the moments people cross the threshold of the vestibule housing the automatic tellers

become notes in an almost random composition, its structure determined by the constant demand for cash and banking services in a commercial urban setting.

Space, place and non-place

The unpredictable movement of people in urban settings has been explored in my practice for several years. *Outside* (2003) is a video installation that looked at the movement of crowds as a random repetitive flow. It was constructed in such a way as to present the flow as a continual hypnotic experience, as multiple interconnected moving tableaux. It is important to return briefly to this work to explain it, and to consider it in relation to a later video installation work, to *Transcanadienne* (2014).

In the summer of 2002, I visited Berlin. As was my practice at the time, I made some video recordings of the movement of people in the city. I had in mind that I wanted to develop a video installation work that would somehow reconstruct the 360-degree space of the urban movement on a single picture plane.¹⁶³ On one afternoon in June, I made several recordings of the crowds walking through, the then still being reconstructed, Potsdamer Platz.¹⁶⁴

Outside presented an urban setting as a play of movement and light. Borrowing from techniques and approaches in structural film,¹⁶⁵

163 I later edited these recordings into four different loops, each with durations of approximately 3 minutes. I then made a composite panoramic moving image of these four loops, "interweaving" them so that a vertical "slice" of the first loop was next to a vertical "slice" of the second loop, next to a vertical slice of the "third" loop and so on. The final image was thus comprised of twelve vertical panels. The images were all moving in real time and were silent. The resulting composite image was repetitive and hypnotic, evoking my impressions of the movements of people in a busy city square. The formation of the wide panel of vertical screens (60 x 180 cm each) recalled the array of windows that filled one wall of the space in which the work was installed. In this manner, the work referred architecturally to the space it occupied.

164 The translating of the space from Potsdamer Platz in Berlin to a rehabilitated light industrial space in the Mile-End district of Montreal was important only in that it presented an unfamiliar city setting to the exhibition's visitors, (one did not look to see if there was anyone one knew amongst the passers-by shown on the screens). The setting of Potsdamer Platz was presented as a kind of "non-place" to the Montreal public.

165 The looped repetitive structure of the editing and the kaleidoscopic fragmenting of the image in *Outside* took the spectator into another temporal space than the one outside the darkened space of the exhibition. There was a hypnotic effect in the movement

the installation had repetitive and hypnotic temporal qualities that resonated with its architectural form. It was not important in this formal complexity that the urban space represented was of historical or personal significance, what was important was the play between the movement in the images and the immersive structure of its presentation. *Outside* was an experiment in reconfiguring an existing architectural space to present, through moving image montage and collage, a temporal structure evocative of what had been experienced in "outside" public space in a contemporary urban setting. With later works, such as *Transcanadienne*, that experience has been "complexified" to include historical and personal observations and reflections on the spaces explored. These observations and reflections subsequently led to an inquiry as to why the spaces were initially found to be attractive and engaging.

Outside manifested an exploration of (dynamic) urban space within the architectural surroundings of the installation. At the time of its exhibition, the anonymity of the city square represented in the work was intentional; *Outside* dealt with movement and phenomena that occur in modern, industrialised urban settings. The specificities of Potsdamer Platz were not foregrounded in this installation. Completely reconstructed after German reunification, Potsdamer Platz has lost much of its historical significance and functions much like other contemporary public spaces, airports and shopping centres. These spaces perform what Marc Augé refers to as "... the spatial overabundance of the present," (Augé 1995, 34) characteristic of his notion of the "non-place."

of passing pedestrians and the movement was rhythmically fragmented by the evenly divided, room size, illuminated image plane. The desired effect was to capture and transfix the attention of the viewer walking into the space. In his 1969 essay "Structural Film", P. Adams Sitney defined the term and explained how he situated structural film as a development of "lyrical film," an earlier iteration of experimental cinema. Sitney describes structural film's specificities; "Four characteristics of the structural film are its fixed camera position (fixed frame from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing, and rephotography off the screen. Very seldom will one find all four characteristics in a single film, and there are structural films which modify these usual elements." (Sitney 2002, 348) While I was not thinking about Sitney's essay when I made *Outside* in 2003, I was producing video work respecting many of the characteristics he enumerated for structural film including hypnotic "flicker" editing techniques, repeated, looped images and fixed camera moving image capture.

With the development of a more involved approach to an exploration of urban spaces it became necessary to acknowledge certain cultural and historical specificities of these landscapes; their sense of place pervaded their "placelessness." Augé writes of place as a site of "a culture localized in time and space" (Augé 1995, 34). Spending time (filming, photographing, observing) a space one slowly becomes aware of its local characteristics and its cultural specificities. In contemporary cities, history is pervasive, often sensed rather than seen. Ivan Chtcheglov, a member of the lettrist group and a proponent, along with Guy Debord of the *dérive* (urban drifting) in *Formulary for Unitary Urbanism* (1953), saw this fractured, partial image of the past operating geologically, as buried strata that are uncovered and recovered over time.

All cities are geological. You can't take three steps without encountering ghosts bearing all the prestige of their legends. We move within a closed landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past. Certain shifting angles, certain receding perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space, but this vision remains fragmentary. (Chtcheglov 1953)

The works developed after *Outside* consider the strata of history inherent in the spaces they explore. The most recent of these was *Transcanadienne*, exhibited in May of 2014 at Galleria Huuto Jätkäsaari in Helsinki. Like *Outside*, this installation was an experiment working within an existing, particular, architectural space¹⁶⁶ to present, through a moving image (and sound) montage, a temporally structured audio-visual experience.

Five rear projection transparent thermoplastic (Plexiglas) panels are suspended in the gallery space. These each show a different image of slightly rundown modern warehouses and light industrial buildings that are a feature of the outskirts of many cities of our century. The images are rear projected and moving. The camera is fixed and the movement occurs mostly in the periphery of the images; grass and trees

166 The architecture of the Galleria Huuto Jätkäsaari is that of a former warehouse; it is high ceilinged with regularly spaced columns breaking up the vast interior.

are seen blowing in a light breeze. If one looks closely at a window on one of the buildings shown on the screens, one sees reflections of vehicles moving quickly along a busy highway. A soundtrack accompanies the images; the on-going, low rumble of traffic is played back over stereo speakers installed behind the screens. To the right of the suspended screens, a text is displayed on an empty white wall. Written in black adhesive letters, legible from a viewer standing several metres away, the text reads:

The Trans-Canada Highway was conceived of and developed in the 1950s and 1960s as a symbolic transnational link that would serve to replace Canada's then diminishing passenger railway system. More of a dream than a realistic way of travelling the thousands of kilometres that separate the urban communities dotted across the vast landmass that is Canada, the highway served as a contour drawing of the imagined lands lying beyond the day to day lives of the country's inhabitants.

The section of the Trans-Canada Highway that traverses Montreal, the *Transcanadienne*, is the freeway connecting the western suburbs to the city centre. One of the main routes that bring traffic into the metropolis, it is a prelude to the city's sprawling urban landscape. The *Transcanadienne* has been lined with warehouses and light industrial facilities since its completion. Visible from the highway, this architecture, at once functional and monumental, embodied the prowess of the city's, and the nation's, industry and economy in the hopeful and ambitious 1960s and 1970s.

The decaying modern architecture along the highway now lingers in the verdant landscaped no-man's land that is a feature of much of the city's periphery. The stillness of these buildings next to the relentless movement of the freeway is experienced as waiting, waiting for time to pass, waiting for the future to arrive.

The installation *Transcanadienne* can be seen as both a representation of architecture and as an intervention into architecture. In this work, architecture is both represented and experienced as time (as an array of looped subtly moving images), as space (as rear projected

images that are suspended in the gallery), but also as place; the site of the buildings represented is referred to by the title and by the wall text that is an integral part of the work.

The buildings that line the Trans-Canada Highway in the western suburbs (the West Island) of Montreal occupy a kind of no man's land, a space between places, between people's homes and where they work and study, and between the city and the country. When visiting these buildings, the site of their architecture, their existing in a "place" become more tangible. The highway plays a part in the individual and collective imagination of the city; the Trans-Canada suggests the possibility of driving across the continent. As a child, I remember driving into Montreal along this road and seeing the fields transforming into the then burgeoning suburban metropolis from the car window.

The buildings function as warehouses and small factories serving, among others, the pharmaceutical, information technology and print communication industries. The vocations of many of these structures have changed since they were first being built in the early 1960s. Many were designed in an architecture that would symbolise the élan and corporate identity of the successful businesses housing them. Over the course of the years these businesses would often move or close down, leaving their architecture behind to be used by new tenants; in many cases the business activities in the structures do not correspond with what they were built for. The architecture becomes a formerly grandiose shell for the itinerant and nomadic commercial activity of the transient and globalised economy of the past decades.

The paradoxical fragility of these imposing structures is expressed through their appearance in the installation. Floating in space, illuminated and pixelated, the video images of the buildings are airy, colourful and unstable. The text on the wall functions to inform the viewer that this architecture is situated close to a busy thoroughfare, a highway that takes people and goods to and from the city. The buildings are most often seen fleetingly from passing vehicles. The traffic that witnesses these fleeting structures is present in the soundtrack filling the space of the projections. With *Transcanadienne* and with many of my other, more recent works, architecture is considered as spatio-temporal phenomena but it is also reflected upon in a historical and

cultural context. In this manner the represented space and, by association, the physical space of the installation oscillate between experienced phenomena and an affected and opaque system of signification, an inchoate semantic structure.

Déjà vu

Making moving image based installations one is engaged in a method of interpreting architecture as experiential constellations of space, place and time. Space and time are felt corporally as duration and as perception within and around the architectural structure. Place is the site, the cultural, social and historical resonance of space and time. While space and time are *a priori* in the perceptual realm; our immediate recognition of when and where we are precedes any knowledge we may have about a place, certain characteristics belonging to a sense of place will ultimately pervade our spatiotemporal perception of architecture and its environment.¹⁶⁷ Seemingly insignificant details of the urban landscape, abandoned or underused buildings, older model cars, deserted streets, resonate as markers of place, of changing and forgotten societies, art and culture; indices of space become signifiers for a disappearing, often culturally dysfunctional, place.

There is an engagement in a process that is inherently intuitive,¹⁶⁸ but ultimately focussed, looking to places and things that draw one's attention and documenting them using a variety of media and approaches. Through this process, specific histories and narratives related to the objects of this attention are revealed. An initial attraction to certain places and specific things is due to a sense, when first seeing

167 According to Marc Augé, "place" is anthropological, linked to the history and culture of a community while "space" is ahistorical and exterior to place, that which exists outside of "place." I posit thus "space" as a physical characteristic without anthropological meaning, as what Augé describes as, "...prophetic evocations of spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future." (Augé 1995, 87)

168 I regard intuition as valid, even essential, process for research and art-making, a process that is routed in rational thought. Xenakis said of intuition, "I think intuition is something rational: it's highly complex and at the same time something of which we're unaware..." (Varga, *Conversations with Xenakis*, 200, as quoted by Kanach 2010, 127)

them, of an unarticulated familiarity with them. This indescribable impact that these objects possess has been investigated through Roland Barthes's ideas of the *obtus* and the photographic *punctum* as well as through psychoanalytical notions of the *unheimlich* (Sigmund Freud) and the neurological condition of *déjà vu*.

Vivian Sobchack, writing of the fragmentary presence of the artefacts of media archaeology, relates their state to Barthes's idea of the *punctum*, the unexpected and disturbing presence of the photographic image.

Reminiscent in function of Roland Barthes's *punctum*, the fragment or trace pierces an *uncanny* hole in quotidian temporality (and comprehension) not only by suddenly "being there" by virtue of being noticed but also, upon inspection, by radically and retrospectively challenging and changing the accepted order of things. (Sobchack 2011, 324)

Roland Barthes proposed the *punctum* as occurring in relation to the photographic image, experienced by the viewer yet defying signification. Sobchack sees a similar experience operating within a concept of media archaeology; she sees the fragments of the media archaeological site resonating with meaning that transcends signification.

Obtus (obtuse) was for Barthes a third meaning in an image after the informational and the symbolic. While the first two meanings could communicate a direct and an indirect message, the obtuse had no signification, but it had, what Barthes referred to as "*significance*," it referred to the field of the signifier.

Is that all? No, for I am still held by the image. I read, I receive (and probably even first and foremost) a third meaning - evident, erratic, obstinate. I do not know what its signified is, at least I am unable to give it a name, but I can see clearly the traits, the signifying accidents of which this - consequently incomplete - sign is composed... (Barthes 1972, 53)

Barthes sees the obtuse as being inarticulate ("evident, erratic, obstinate") and beyond reason. Without aesthetic value, the obtuse

occupies a vast and heterogeneous domain outside culture and rationality that includes the comic, the irrelevant and the carnivalesque.

... analytically, it has something derisory about it: opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytic reason; it belongs to the family of pun, buffoonery, useless expenditure. Indifferent to moral or aesthetic categories (the trivial, the futile, the false, the pastiche), it is on the side of the carnival. (Barthes 1972, 55)

With its carnivalesque trappings the obtuse would seem to be in operation within the realm of popular culture. Barthes first identified this “third meaning” when analysing film stills. Referring to the imagery in the film *Ivan the Terrible* (S. M. Eisenstein, 1944), Barthes posits the obtuse as a characteristic of moving image media, a kind of meaning that is created through the unfolding of the film.

If, however, the specific filmic (the filmic of the future) lies not in movement, but in an inarticulable third meaning that neither the simple photograph nor figurative painting can assume since they lack the diegetic horizon ... then the ‘movement’ regarded as the essence of film is not animation, flux, mobility, ‘life’, copy, but simply the framework of a permutational unfolding ... (Barthes 1972, 67)

Barthes’s obtuse is a transmission of meaning inherent to the filmic. It is a meaning that is felt rather than communicated. One could posit another, similar, obtuse kind of meaning transmitted through episodes of lived experience. The structures, environments and objects that are the focus of my work are characterised by an attraction they possess that occurs beyond any informational or symbolic significance. Beyond explicit signification they embody what Barthes, borrowing from Julia Kristeva,¹⁶⁹ refers to as “*signifiance*,” and, as they have been come across through travels and wandering, through an experience unfolding temporally, their presence are not unlike those

169 In her 1969 essay *Semeiotikê. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Julia Kristeva posited *signifiance* taking place in a text as a formulation following mathematical logic to understand the “successive reshapings and rewavings of the web of language” (Kristeva 1969, 225)

of the “filmic” objects that Barthes writes about as having a “third meaning.”

Marc Augé ascribes a link between attraction and the localisation of culture into territory; we are attracted to places that are culturally familiar to us, but Augé also acknowledges a collective attraction for the non-place and the freedom of movement it proposes.

What is significant in the experience of non-place is the power of attraction, inversely proportional to territorial attraction, to the gravitational pull of place and tradition. This is obvious in different ways in the weekend and holiday stampedes along the motorways, the difficulty experienced by traffic controllers in coping with jammed air routes, the success of the latest forms of retail distribution. (Augé 1995, 118)

The attraction for space devoid of territorial familiarity, a sort of spatial *tabula rasa*,¹⁷⁰ would seem to operate in conjunction with the attraction for the culturally familiar, the collective home. Sigmund Freud’s concept of the uncanny (the *unheimlich*), the strange feeling that one is familiar with something despite having never seen it before, resonates as a meaning that hovers beyond the symbolic and signification.¹⁷¹ The spatial characteristics of architecture, buildings and urban sites, lend themselves to this perception of them as being like home (as sharing architectural qualities with a house) and not like it (as public or commercial spaces without the intimate familiarity of home).

But if the uncanny is triggered spatially, by the physical forms of architecture and the layout of urban geography, it presents itself as a temporal phenomenon to the subject experiencing it. One finds something familiar because one remembers it, or something like it, from

170 The attraction for the empty and barren is something that Tacita Dean reflects upon in her films and her writing. Referring to the bleak, empty landscape of Dungeness, the marshy peninsula on England’s south coast, Dean writes: “It is an empty desolate place, and I am sure it is this desolation that makes Dungeness so utterly attractive: that in its emptiness it can become so full.” (Dean 2011, 27)

171 Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay “The Uncanny,” writes, “the ‘uncanny’ is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar.” (Freud 1919, 1-2)

one's past experiences. An initial attraction may be an unconscious one, or even linked to a neurological condition as the feeling of *déjà vu* has been diagnosed.¹⁷² The possible recognition of the spaces visited and happened upon follows a process of mental tracing, an internal mapping of their architecture and site. It is a temporal process that precedes and triggers the flash of the *déjà vu* moment. The diagnosis of *déjà vu* was undertaken when the condition became more recognisable with the development and proliferation of the cinematic narrative and its use of flashbacks and temporal ellipses.¹⁷³ Thus the condition is linked as much to architecture and urban space as it is to the technologies and aesthetics of the moving image.¹⁷⁴

Recognition of a forgotten past moment, nonclinical *déjà vu*, is informed by the cinematic "flashback," the scene that shows something that came before the diegetic "present." But the process must also be extra-diegetic, referring to something beyond the diegesis of the film, but inherent to the film's history. Robert Smithson writes that watching films puts us in a state of slovenliness, near sleep, where our unconscious remembers all films we have ever seen.

Somewhere at the bottom of my memory are the sunken remains of all the films I have ever seen. Good and bad they

172 Scientific research has been conducted to associate *déjà vu* with neurological anomalies. "The strongest pathological association of *déjà vu* is with temporal lobe epilepsy. This correlation has led some researchers to speculate that the experience of *déjà vu* is possibly a neurological anomaly related to improper electrical discharge in the brain." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Déjà_vu) consulted August 5, 2015.)

173 In 1955 Doctor Wilder Penfield performed experiments with the electrical stimulation of the temporal lobe at McGill University. The stimulation resulted in some of his patients experiencing a sensation of *déjà vu*. "...seizures arising in the medial temporal lobe may result in a 'dreamy state', consisting of vivid memory-like hallucinations, and/or the sense of having previously lived through exactly the same situation (*déjà vu*). Penfield demonstrated that the dreamy state can sometimes be evoked by electrical stimulation of the lateral temporal neocortex, especially the superior temporal gyrus." (Bancaud, Brunet-Bourgin, Chauvel and E. Halgren 1994)

174 In *Expanded Cinema*, Gene Youngblood, in a *déjà vu* manner, not only proposed the reconfiguration of the cinematic viewing space, but also, ultimately, the redundancy of the architecture of cinema. "With the perfection of holographic cinema within the next two decades, we'll arrive at that point in the evolution of intelligence when the concept of reality no longer will exist. Beyond that the cinema will be one with life of the mind, and humanity's communications will become increasingly metaphysical." (Youngblood 1970, 43)

swarm together forming cinematic mirages, stagnant pools of images that cancel each other out. (Smithson 1996, 138)

A sense of *déjà vu* is also experienced by the viewer of the film *Spiral Jetty* as a mnemonic linkage to his earthwork of the same name is made. Smithson did not make the film as a document of the earthwork, but rather he saw the two works function together within a network of connectivity, within a realm of references between both of the *Spiral Jettys*, a "teetering realm," an endless archive that encompassed much more beyond them.

A kind of aphasia orders this teetering realm. Not one order but many orders clash with one another, as do "facts" in an obsolete encyclopedia. (Smithson 1996, 139-140)

George Baker, writing about the film, sees the realm existing as an "inventory of the disconnected" (Baker 2005, 86). He refers to the "interstitial space" in film, the space between the frames, but also the space between the film and its subject, in this case between the two works. This is a vast space not of signification, but what Smithson refers to as a space of "an inventories of limbo." (Smithson 1996, 139) It is a space that echoes the space of Barthes's "third meaning," a space of cinema that allows for uncertainty, the trivial and the remote. Being engulfed in this space is existing outside of linear time, where past, future and present are confounded and the *déjà vu* is simultaneously *être vu* and *à voir*, the "already seen" is "being seen" and "to be seen."







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List of images

- 20–21 *Untitled (Alexanderplatz)*
2010, Installation for 84 inkjet photographs mounted on MDF, 45 x 60 cm each photo.
Exhibited at Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, Finland, July 2010.
- 22 *Flâneur*
2010, LCD display, black and white video programme, silent.
0:30 minutes looped, 15 x 20 x 2 cm.
Exhibited at Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, Finland, July 2010.
- 23–25 *Automat*
2010, Installation for widescreen video projection, 6 channel surround sound and 4 etchings. Video and sound programme: 9:00 minutes, looped.
Etchings 55 x 75 cm each.
Exhibited at Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, Finland, July 2010.
Photographs on pages 24–25 by Pierre Perrault.
- 26 *Fahrgast*
2010, LCD display, black and white video programme, silent.
0:20 minutes looped, 15 x 20 x 2 cm.
Exhibited at Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, Finland, July 2010.
- 44–51 *Monuments*
2010, 3 projected Super 8 films transferred to DVD, 3:20 minutes each film, looped.
Exhibited at Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, Finland, July 2010.
- 88 *Untitled (Alsina)*
Colour HD video projection, mono sound, 4:00 minutes, looped.
Exhibited at Galleria Jangva, Helsinki, Finland, January, 2011.
- 89–91 *Untitled (504)*
2011, 2 Kodak Carousel slide projectors, 160 35mm colour slides projected in a loop.
Exhibited at Galleria Jangva, Helsinki, Finland, January, 2011.
- 92 *Puerto Madero*
2011, HD video, colour, stereo, 4:00 minutes.
Exhibited at Galleria Jangva, Helsinki, Finland, January, 2011.
- 120–124 *The translation*
2011, Handwritten text on paper framed in Plexiglas box, object (book) framed in Plexiglas box, colour inkjet photo mounted on MDF.
Text: 40 x 20 x 2 cm, object: 20 x 15 x 2 cm, photo: 120 x 100 cm.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, Finland, April – May, 2011.
- 125–128 *Untitled (architecture)*
2011, Colour ink jet prints mounted on MDF, 3 elements: 42 x 70 cm each.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, Finland, April – May, 2011.

- 156–171 *Untitled (streets)*
2011, Still digital images on LCD displays, 7 elements: 30 x 20 x 2 cm each.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, Finland, April – May, 2011.
- 202–205 *Untitled (pavilion)*
2011, Slide projection. 4 colour slides projected in continuous loop.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, Finland, April – May, 2011.
- 206–207 *Plan*
2011, Computer drawing, inkjet on Arches paper, 100 x 110 cm.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, Finland, April – May, 2011.
- 230–235 *Transcanadienne*
2014, Installation for 5 HD video projections, stereo sound and vinyl lettering.
Video and sound programme: 2:00 minutes, looped.
Exhibited at Galleria Huuto Jätkäsaari, Helsinki, Finland, May 2014.

All photographs by Paul Landon unless otherwise noted.

Exhibitions

- Recent Images, Galleria FAFA, Helsinki, July 9–25, 2010.
Future in the Past, Galleria Jangva, Helsinki, January 13–30, 2011.
Paul Landon, Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, April 20 – May 5, 2011.
Transcanadienne, Galleria Huuto Jätkäsaari, Helsinki, May 10 –25, 2014.

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