

# **Site-Specific Art as an Exploration of Spatial and Temporal Limitations**

By

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## Abstract

This practice-based thesis examines the relationship between space, time and the human presence. It is concerned with the dialectic exchanges between my work and the places in which its meaning is defined. Oppositions between space/place, place/non-place, and immobility/movement, articulate the spatial and temporal limitations that delineate my site-specific practice and its experience.

The exploration of the relationship between the notion of time and my practice has profoundly affected my research, which has itself endured for an extended period of time. This is described in chronological sequence: 1) initial site-specific installations, 2) site-writing: the thesis and photographic documentation of the installations, 3) installation of the documentation of the initial site-specific installations on the occasion of my viva.

My thesis emphasises the role of the viewer's presence, including the moment in time and the presence of other people in experiencing the site-specific work. The question posed is whether the 'literality' of site-specific art can encompass antithetical notions of site as they appear in contemporary life. The hypothesis advanced is that by adjusting the limits between the double experience of the fluidities and continuities of space and time, on the one hand, and their ruptures and disconnections, on the other, site-specific art may allow viewers to think and experience apparent contradictions as sustaining relations.

My thesis looks at three works: *Central Corridor* (2003), *Seven Windows Divided by Two* (2004) and *In Site Compression* (2007). Their documentations emphasise the paradox of representing site-specific work on the page. Another set of documentation will be exhibited at the viva, comprising the material of a new situation with its own spatio-temporal relationships (other than those of the initial installations), and will require anew the physical participation of the viewer to be perceived.

For Krina, Kostadis and Panagiotis

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I wish to thank my supervisors David Cross and Michael Asbury for their encouragement, critical commentary and practical wisdom, all of which helped to push me forward.

Heartfelt thanks are also due to my children and husband for their patience, love and support.

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# Introduction

## Site and mobility

The location or literal 'place' where a site-specific work is situated manifests the engagement of the artist in the art–site relationship. Robert Irwin has divided the relationship between site and artistic intervention into four categories. The first category – 'site-dominant' – refers to work that embodies the classical tenets of permanence, transcendence and historical content; the second – 'site-adjusted' – refers to work that, despite adjustments in scale, appropriateness and placement, is either made or conceived in the studio and transported to, or assembled, on site (Irwin 1985: 9–29). The third category is 'site-specific' work, and the fourth is 'site-conditioned/determined'. As described by Robert Irwin, in site-specific interventions, the site sets the parameters for the artist's response and is in part the reason for the intervention, while in site-conditioned/determined interventions, the artist's direct experience of the site determines the sculptural response (Irwin, cited in Doherty 2009: 44–6). For both these two last categories, the viewer's bodily incursion into the situation articulated by the work is a prerequisite for its perception and experience, and are the categories relevant to this research.

Site-specificity, or the relationship between work and site, finds its origin in Minimalist sculpture of the 1960s, which defined the relationship between object and site as original and fixed. As Douglas Crimp has written in *On the Museum's Ruins* (Crimp 1993: 16–17), artists such as Robert Morris, Frank Stella and Donald Judd, by insisting on the spectator's 'self-conscious perception' of their objects, displaced the importance of the artist–subject relationship to that of the spectator–object relationship. This displacement, Crimp argued, was the result of the relationship of the artwork to the particular environment in which it was placed, and 'site-specificity' (cited in Kaye 2000: 3) was therefore defined not only by 'the special characteristics of the minimalist object's specific position', but by a displacement of the viewer's attention towards the space occupied by both themselves and the object.

Site-specificity is thus linked to the incursion of the 'surrounding', 'literal' or 'real' space into the viewer's experience of the artwork, and the conventional opposition, between the virtual space of the artwork and the 'real space' of its context, is converted into the opposition between the literal space where the work is positioned and the space created by the work's elements. The interpretation of the term 'site' by the artists, and the exploration of the viewer's engagement with site-specific interventions into the gallery, the city or other found sites, is an important part of the history of site-specific art. In the late 1960s and early 70s, site-specific art incorporated the physical conditions of a particular location as integral to an artwork's production, presentation and reception. Artists (such as Dennis Oppenheim) created works that aimed to provoke an experiential understanding of site, where the physical attributes of a particular location and architecture served as a foil for the artwork. Alternatively, the site of the artwork was also understood as constituted by social, economic and political processes (Michael Asher, Walter de Maria, Robert Smithson). Artists such as Richard Serra and John Ahearn extended the site of art to the 'public realm' and, by refusing to engage in the circulation of commodities, Serra made the gallery itself part of the work's experience. In his sculpture *Slice* (1980), the room was divided by the work into two non-communicating areas – public and private. Similarly, *Tilted Arc* (1981), conceived for Federal Plaza, New York, was conceived for the site and altered the latter's very nature by disrupting its normal function and introducing a quality of discomposure between the work and site, which aimed 'to bring into relief the repressed social contradictions that underlie public spaces' (Kwon 2004: 75).

It is useful here to consider the art–site relationship in site-specific performance. Gordon Matta-Clark's *Untitled Performance* (1971) (Pier 18, New York) consisted of a kind of 'drawing', a line from floor to ceiling composed by him hanging from the Hudson's pier ceiling upside down above a tree's apex, and was intended to express a 'hermetic inner personal gesture by which the microcosmic self is related to the whole' (Gordon Matta-Clark 2003: 33). Francis Alÿs' *Seven Walks* (2004–5), enacted and recorded in central London

under special time conditions in the early morning, consisted of another kind of 'drawing', which was 'about going from nothing to something, the making of a square' (Alÿs 2005: 30).



Fig.1. Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981–89, installation view, steel, 3,66 x 36,58 m x 6,5 cm. Federal Plaza, New York. Photograph: Susan Swidler, copyright: Richard Serra/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Fig. 2. Gordon Matta Clark, *Untitled Performance*, 1971, Pier 18, New York. Photographs: Harry Shunk and Janos Kender

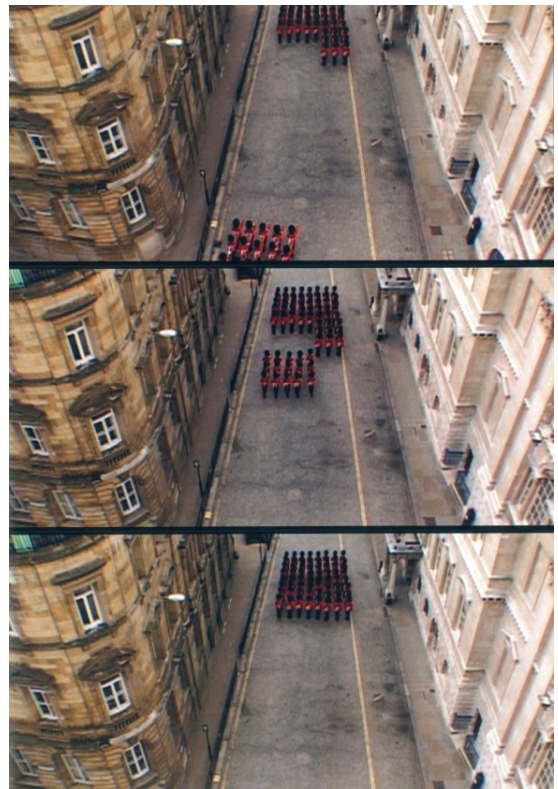


Fig. 3. Francis Alÿs, *Seven Walks*, 2004–5, London. Photograph: Francis Alÿs

Today, the notion of site is no longer bound to the physical properties of a place – the electronic age has obliterated space and overlaid places. Travelling by plane, switching channels on a television set, or rewinding and fast-forwarding a

videotape promote space to an attempt to place and understand time, and are all actions that invest site with properties that allow the participant to follow events. As a result, every site is characterised by a sense of mobility and is defined by fluid, shifting and transient acts and relationships.

This change in the notion of site underlies Nick Kaye's argument that the concept of site associated with site-specificity, is different from 'any given or particular *kind* of place or formal approach to site' (Kaye 2000: 3). To this attitude is added the statement of Miwon Kwon that art sites can be 'as various as a billboard, an artistic genre, a disenfranchised community, an institutional framework, a magazine page, or a social cause... It can be literal like a street corner or virtual like a theoretical concept' (Kwon 2004: 3).

The artistic field itself can function as an 'environment', where the contemporary work of art can not only reside but also be born. Guy Debord argued in his book *A User's Guide to Détournement* (1956, cited in Bourriaud 2002: 36) that everything could be used in several combinations for the alteration of their meanings, encouraging the use of existing works for the formation of 'lived situations over the fabrication of works that confirmed the division between actors and spectators of existence'. Bourriaud (2002: 17) affirmed this attitude in his book, *Postproduction*, when he states that the artistic field is no longer to be considered a museum containing works that must be cited, or 'surpassed', as the modernist ideology of originality would have it, but 'a storehouse filled with tools that should be used, stockpiles of data to manipulate and present', thereby opening the issue of dialectic relations between previous and contemporary works of art, as will be discussed in this research on my own practice. Moreover, reflecting on public space, Bourriaud argues that every place – art centre, gallery, club, school or street – is equally good to serve as an exhibition site, since the exhibition site has become 'a place of production like any other' (Bourriaud 2002: 71).

Mobility as a determining factor in defining the art site involves the incorporation of important oppositions in the experience of art and its site. Today, the notion of the art site is transformed from a sedentary to a nomadic model and

as a result, the site-specificity of a work implies impermanence and transience rather than permanence and immobility. The impermanence or temporality of the site-specific project derives from the fact that it cannot be re-presented anywhere else without altering its meaning, firstly because it is defined by a unique set of spatio-temporal circumstances and, secondly, because it depends on unpredictable on-site relations. The punctuality and precision of site-specific art can, however, supply uniqueness of locational identity, as a counter to the undifferentiated landscape of the abstract, homogenised or fragmented space of the modern city. In other words, by offering viewers a unique experience to be lived (in terms of spatio-temporal punctuality), site-specific practice has the potential to shatter the logic of the 'common spectacle'.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the art site has also become destabilised since it is organised through the nomadic movement of the artist. 'Itinerant' artists, as named by Kwon (2004: 46), travel in order to accomplish the determining prerequisite for their project/response – their bodily presence in the site. Thus every site-oriented project is connected to the artist's prior projects in other places, in a trajectory referred to by Kwon as the 'fifth site: the exhibition history of the artist' (Kwon 2004: 46–55). This mobility of site-specific art, in contrast to its punctuality, results in the 'erasure of differences, via the commodification and serialization of places' (Kwon 2004: 46–55).

The transient character of the contemporary art site is discussed in this research in relation to what is defined as 'proper' place, a term that expresses the notion of a space's own character: the notion of 'being at home' as distinct from 'elsewhere', or the place where one is at ease with others and that can be 'understood without too much difficulty' (Decombes, cited in Augé 2008: 87). A similar notion is discussed by Kwon in her book *One Place after Another*.

Often we are comforted by the thought that a place is ours that we belong to

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'common spectacle' refers to the multiplicity of images of every kind that immerse the individual in their everyday life and create an image of the world as smooth as the individual would like it to be. Their origin is diverse (television, advertisements, printed material, photos taken from satellites, even the view from large residential towers) and they habituate the human gaze to an alienated view of things, which anticipates a passive and detached optical contemplation.

it and therefore are tied to it in some fundamental way. Such places ('right places?') are thought to reaffirm our sense of self, reflecting back to us an unthreatening picture of a grounded identity. (2004: 163)

Opposed to the notion of the 'right place' is that of the 'wrong place', a concept for a new model of belonging in transience, deriving from the desire and research for place-bound identities in an undifferentiated sea of abstract, homogenised and fragmented space (a characteristic of the modern condition), and an anti-nostalgic embrace of a fluid subjectivity, identity and spatiality. In the destabilised society of today, distinctions between the wrong and the proper place have ceased to be clear, or perhaps the two are now bound together in their instability (see Kwon 2004: 164).

Throughout this research, and especially in Chapter 1 (*Seven Windows Divided by Two*, 2004), the question posed is whether site-specific practice can hold in dialectical tension the antithetical poles of today's spatial experience. If this is the case, the argument is proposed that site-specific art may offer an experience of relational specificity that reconciles the wrong with the proper place, and time-specificity with site-specificity.

### **Performativity and the body**

The meaning of the site-specific work of art resides not only in the relationship between the 'space' proposed by the work and the place where it is situated, but also in the relationship created by a third important parameter: the 'phenomenal space' of the body of the viewer. According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, perception involves the whole body and is dependent on the perceiving subject and the circumstances of the present moment, which determine what is perceived and how. This important claim, which has been used in the past to theorise the experience offered by site-specific installations, plays a significant role in the development of the questions posed and the hypothesis advanced by this research.

Phenomenological analysis concentrates on achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, arguing that the world is already there as an

inalienable presence before reflection begins. More precisely, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology seeks to rediscover phenomena, the layer of lived experience imposed on, or withheld from, the individual. He argues that subject and object are not separate entities, but are reciprocally intertwined and interdependent. On the other hand, claiming that 'nothing is more difficult than to know precisely what we see', he argues that 'the immediate is not an impression, the object which is one with the subject, but the meaning, the structure and the spontaneous arrangement of parts' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 67).

The importance of the viewer's body for the perception of the Minimalist sculptural object was first analysed by Michael Fried, who, by arguing that the experience of Minimalist art is of 'an object *in a situation* – one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*' (Fried 1968: 125, cited in Kaye 2000: 4), introduced the notion of site-specificity. Since Minimalism challenged the privileged position of the viewer as observer outside the work, site-specific art is defined by various inter-related orders of space that comprise the phenomenal space of the body of the viewer in its experience. As Claire Bishop has suggested, the qualitative impact of the various inter-related orders of space of site-specific works in the viewer's experience can be divided into three categories. The first, deriving from the hypothesis that the inclusion of the viewer in the work makes them the subject of the work's experience, emphasises not only sensory immediacy and physical participation, but also a heightened awareness of other visitors who become part of the piece (Bishop 2005: 11). Characteristic examples in this category are Olafur Eliasson's *Your Uncertain Shadow* (2010), Robert Irwin's *Double Diamond* (1997–98), and Dan Graham's *Public Space/Two Audiences* (1976), which stage perceptual experiments for viewers that demonstrate how our awareness of the world is dependent on interaction with others.

The second category is bound to the viewer's need to move around and through the site-specific work to experience it. This action activates the viewer by placing greater responsibility on them and is regarded as 'emancipatory' in terms of their engagement with the world. Hélio Oiticica's works, which engaged with the architecture of the favelas (slums) and the communities that lived in

them, are good examples of this type of site-specific art. His *Penetrables* and *Parangoles* could be regarded as situations that permitted the participant to realise their own creative potential through ‘direct engagement with the world, based on the intensity of sensory perception’ (Bishop 2005: 64). For Robert Irwin, the viewer’s self-consciousness and inclusion in his work pointed to ‘...the individual responsibility of the viewer, to structure for her/himself a “new state of real” and to reason her/his own world view’ (Bishop 2005: 58, 76, 77).



Fig. 4. Olafur Eliasson, *Your Uncertain Shadow (colour)*, 2010, installation view, HMI lamps (blue, orange, magenta, green), glass, aluminium, transformers, dimensions variable. Collection: Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna

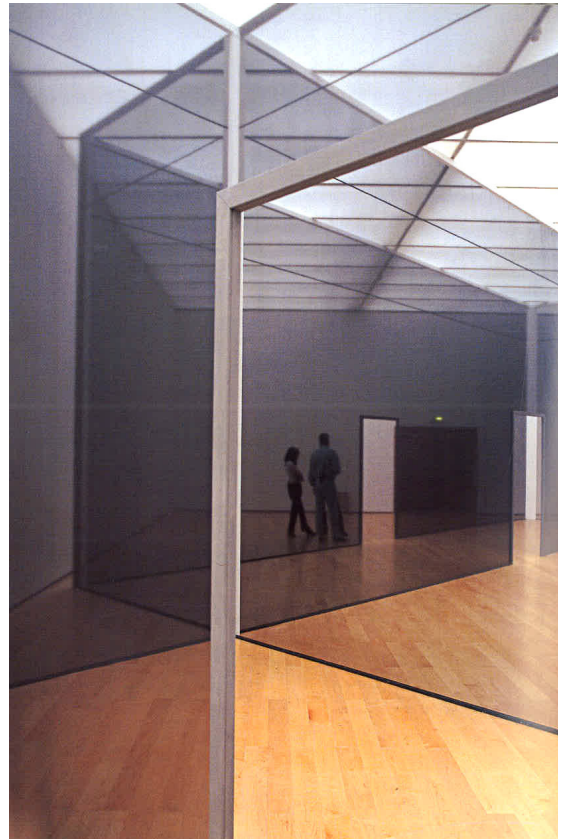


Fig. 5. Robert Irwin, *Double Diamond*, 1997–98, installation view, metal and wood frames, voile (trevira), white and black, 32 x 17 x 5 m overall. Collection: Musée D'Art Contemporain de Lyon. Photograph: Blaise Adilon

The third category connects the incursion of the viewer’s body to the spatio-temporal relationships raised by the work, and to a sense of ‘decentring’ that derives from the multiple perspectives the site-specific work offers and that deny the viewer any ideal place from which to survey it. The same way the horizon is defined by the point of view of the observer, since ‘the horizon’s distance would be abolished if I were not there to scan it with my gaze’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 67),

site-specific installation is first defined by the point of view of the viewer, from the position that they elect to stand in relation to it. Moreover, the work's perception by the viewer depends on the perceptual tradition they elect to carry. As the critic Jean Fisher has argued, the multiple points of view offered to viewers by Gabriel Orothco's site-specific work *Empty Club* (1996), by not allowing them 'to map themselves within an entirely familiar field, [caused them as a result to] lose their sense of certainty and become decentred' (Fisher, cited in Bishop 2005: 130), while in the situation proposed by artists such as Bruce Nauman, the body of the viewer, 'rather than being a unified repository of sensory perceptions, is in fact, in conflict with itself' (Bishop 2005: 69).



Fig. 6. Dan Graham, *Public Space/Two Audiences*, 1976, installation view, Venice Biennale, Ambiente Arte, Venice, Italy, sound-insulated panels, glass, muslin, and fluorescent lights, 7 x 2 m, 9 x 2 m, 3 m overall. Collection: Van AbbeMuseum, Eindhoven

The materiality of the site-specific work of art (its actual elements) offers pathways of consciousness through reality because it makes material the relations between the individual, other viewers and the surrounding 'space'. On the other hand, the viewer also participates creatively in the experience of the site-specific work. Rather than staring at the forms presented, the viewer is required by site-specific work to be bodily present, since participation is necessary for transforming the spatio-temporal relationships of the place where the site-specific installation is located.

The viewer's sensory perception during physical immersion in the site-specific work of art constitutes the measure of its state of equilibrium. Conversely, the state of equilibrium articulated by the artwork is also influenced by the set of

relationships generated by the unique and temporary presence of the viewer (see Mc Lucas, Morgan and Pearson 1995: 48, cited in Kaye: 55). Hence the ephemeral act of experiencing the site-specific work of art has a double function: not only does it announce the importance of the body of the viewer for its accomplishment, it also connects the notion of time to the spatial relationships between viewer, location and work, thus introducing site-specificity in the 'performative' sense (the term borrowed from Kaye: 56–7). The 'performative' aspect, understood as the viewer's bodily participation in the spatio-temporal situation of the site-specific work, is defined in this research, and especially in Chapter 2 (*Central Corridor*, 2003), as a means for elaborating the work's spatial and temporal limitations.

### **Time and reproduction**

What is the relationship between time and space in site-specific art today? How does the temporality of the site-specific work manifest itself and how does it affect those who do not experience it directly? What is the interrelation of this thesis and time, as defined by the chronological sequence of the research – site-specific installation (the initial one), site-writing<sup>2</sup> (thesis), and installation of the documentation of the initial site-specific installation?

In considering the place of documentation within site-specific practice, it is argued in this thesis that the displacement that documentation acts out is intrinsic to the nature of this type of work. The interrelation of time and space is clearly evident from the temporal character of site-specific work and any shift in this relation can generate a change in meaning, as has been expressed by Richard Serra. With reference to the potential movement of his work *Tilted Arc*, Serra said: 'To move the work is to destroy the work' (Serra 1994: 194). Similarly, Nick Kaye has written that 'to move the site-specific work is to *re-place* it, to make it *something else*' (Kaye 2000: 2). This temporary character of the site-specific work reflects the speed of 'supermodernity', to borrow a term from

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'site-writing' refers to the notion of spatial practice that characterises the writing of my thesis, since it involved the processes of thinking, designing and structuring my research. For a more detailed explanation, see, pp. 25–6.

Marc Augé, and converts it into a series of 'snapshots' in the viewer's memory, promoting it to the status of a non-place. As Augé has proposed, non-places, 'meaning spaces which are listed, classified, promoted to the status of "places of memory" and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position', are the real measures of our time today.<sup>3</sup>

As Vito Acconci has also said, 'space is an attempt to place and understand time' (cited in Doherty 2009: 136). However, the site-specific work, built with the site, by means of the site, incorporates not only time, it also includes a performative dimension on account of the physical presence of the viewers, who become the medium of change within the site.

This raises the question of the reproduction of the site-specific work, and of how it reforms the original spatio-temporal relationships. The preservation of a work of art 'tends toward spatial fixity as against temporal flux' (Julian Stallabrass et al. 2000: 21), and its reproduction similarly acts a means of preserving time by fixing it in space: the space of the photograph, the hard disk or any other digital storage medium. According to Daniel Buren (Buren 1991: 19, cited in Kaye 2015), the reproduction of any work of art, especially a work whose meaning is defined by its relationship to real space, is a betrayal, regardless of how faithfully it recreates the original. Whether experienced first-hand or from documentation, the site-specific work always refers to the site for which it was created. Documentation reflects upon the phenomenological limitlessness of the experience of the real space for which it was designed, by tracing the structure and vocabulary of the reproductive medium (such as video) over the site, which they cannot contain. Both the documentation and the work foreground their own limits.

The documentation of a work of art constitutes the medium for its future re-presentation. Re-presentation, by definition, signals the absence of the original object and is antithetical to the notion of place. In his essay 'The

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<sup>3</sup> The distinction between places and non-places derives from the opposition between place and space. An essential preliminary here is the analysis of the notions of place and space suggested by Michel de Certeau, who does not oppose place and space in the way that place is opposed to non-place. Rather, space for him is a 'frequented place', an intersection of moving bodies – a performed place.

Photographic Activity of Postmodernism', Douglas Crimp argues that 'the desire of representation exists only insofar as it can never be fulfilled, insofar as the original always is deferred. It is only in the absence of the original that representation can take place' (Crimp 1993: 119). In order to represent the site-specific-work, one has to construct a *removal* from it, which reflects not only the moving of its location/site but also the removal of the mobility caused by shifting and transient viewers in its space. This is why the experience of the site-specific work is irreproducible.

Moreover, the documentation of site-specific installations is much less satisfactory than reproductions of painting and sculpture, since it cannot convey the viewer's experience of heightened bodily awareness when moving around. To demonstrate the limited value of photographic documentation in relation to his work, Robert Irwin said: 'The idea of midwifing experience is absurd for this reason: the relationship between art and viewer is all firsthand 'now' experience, and there is no way that it can be carried to you through any kind of secondary system' (Irwin 1971: 88). Hence the extent to which the medial afterlife of *Seven Windows...*, *Central Corridor* and *In Site Compression* can tell us something about them is rather small, since all three rely on real physical and spatial experience in order to be perceived. This is why this research has been concerned with finding new solutions for the use of recorded and photographic documentation, despite their initial documentary role. What are the properties of this documentary material and how they can be exploited?

What happens when the reproduction/documentation of a site-specific work, instead of effacing itself in favour of what it recalls, becomes the medium of another work? In overturning documentation to serve creative expression, not only does it declare its own limits, it also reveals the limits of the initial medium, or hidden aspects of it.

Michelangelo Pistoletto's work *The Rooms, October 1975–September 1976* is an example of how the reproduction of a site-specific work becomes another site-specific work. In *Le Stanze (The Rooms)* (1975–76), 12 consecutive installations occupied the Christian Stein Gallery in Turin from

October 1975 to September 1976, creating a disjunction between 'real' and 'virtual' spaces. These spaces were created by reflections of the real space in mirror surfaces, or by juxtaposing the real space with its reproductions, in order to offer a broader consideration of place and space (see Kaye 2000: 31–3). Gabriel Orozco, on the other hand, when talking about the photographs that document his performances, argues that their importance lies not in their physical attributes but in whether the 'transported' 'idea is strong enough in terms of time and space' (cited in Doherty 2009: 92). The literal components of the site-specific installation reflect the response of the artist to the site and act as the vehicle for her/his ideas in terms of time and space. Consequently, when documentation of the original work is exhibited in another site, this results in a different artistic response and a new set of spatio-temporal relationships.

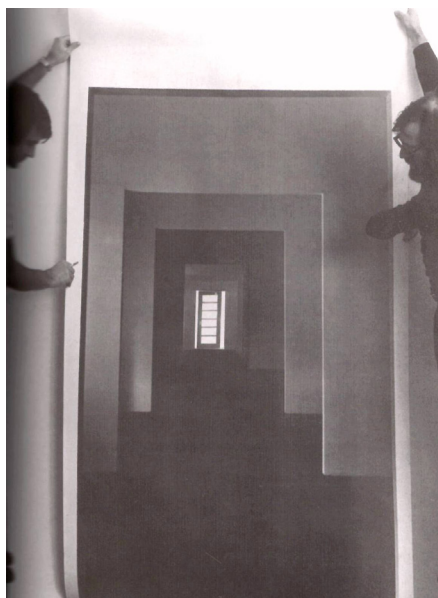


Fig. 7. Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Le Stanze* (*The Rooms*), 1975–76, installation view, mixed media, photograph, 125 x 230 cm. Twelve consecutive shows in the course of a year, Christian Stein Gallery, Turin, Photograph: Paolo Mussat Sartor. Copyright: Michelangelo Pistoletto

Through documentation, the *real* space of the work is, then, transformed into a *virtual* space. Regardless of medium, the work is converted into another site-specific installation hosted in a real space, which in turn will convert its virtual condition into a new reality. Hence, with the second installation, the

status of the two spaces is reversed: the initial installation now exists in a virtual space while the second occupies the real. In the second installation, the transgressing boundaries between the virtual space of the initial installation and the real space of the second can be approached by viewers both in the *absence* of the real site of the initial installation, and in the *presence* of the literality of the site of the second installation.

The same limitations that governed the initial installation will also govern the new one, with the exception that in the latter the new site and the documentation material (instead of the real components of the initial installation) become the only tangible manifestation perceived by viewers. Where the documentation consists of a video projection, viewers will, in addition, be called on to acknowledge their position in an ambiguous space, where not only 'the radical non-materiality of the filmic image' is revealed (Wilder 2014: 361), but also 'actual and projected geometries overlap' (Wilder 2014: 368). As Ken Wilder has written in *Filmic Bodies: Transgressing Boundaries between Filmic and Real Space* (2014), in 'situated' moving-image installations 'a beholder experiences the work in a manner that draws upon the situated encounter within the real time and space' (Wilder 2014: 367). Unlike the original installation, where the viewer was able to enter and explore its literal constructed space, the spatial situation of the new one is activated by the 'configurational' (I have borrowed the term from Ken Wilder) properties of a situated moving image.

Moreover, the temporality connected with the original work's site-specificity has been changed, since the reproduction can be revisited again and again and develops its own kind of time-specificity. The life of this site-specific installation thus develops in stages, uniting space with time, and in the sequence of the different site-specific installations that derive from the first one, each site, as well as each iteration, becomes equally precious.

This research therefore proposes the notion of another kind of mobility for the site-specific work: an installation of its reproductions. This thesis announces in advance the exhibition of the documentation: it precedes the concrete realisation of the exhibition of the documentation to which it refers,

and follows its conception. In this way, writing the thesis becomes a functional part of this secondary stage of the site-specific work and, along with the documentations presented in this essay, emphasises the displacements that occur through recollecting the temporary situations generated by my site-specific installations.

Following these thoughts, Chapter 3 analyses the contradictory elements raised by the site-specific installation *In Site Compression* (2007) and the factors that confine it. The documentation of this work, when presented for the thesis exhibition, will raise a different set of spatio-temporal relationships. The encounter between these two different situations highlights the existence of a number of antithetical notions, such as representation and experience, actual and virtual, object and viewer, permanent and temporary, and will produce important conclusions for the definition of site-specificity.

## **Methodology**

My research is developed in three stages: 1) site-specific installations, 2) site-writing: the thesis, 3) new site-specific installations derived from documentation of the initial ones.

My thesis comprises a theorised account of three of my site-specific installations, *Central Corridor* (2003), *Seven Windows...* (2004), and *In Site Compression*, (2007); their documentation, together with that of the new site-specific installations that derived from them (*After Central Corridor*, 2003 (2017), *After Seven Windows Divided by Two*, 2004 (2017), *After In Site Compression*, 2007 (2017)), which is also incorporated into this thesis, emphasises the paradox of representing site-specific work on the page. The coexistence of the documentation of past and new installations in the same text enforces the notion of the thesis as 'a space', located spatially and temporally between the initial and subsequent installations.

My thesis, overall, occurs as written text, drawings and images. The writing involved processes of thinking about, designing and structuring the

research, which can be understood as a spatial construction. This notion of spatial construction: a form of spatial practice, is driven both by the spatial situations that derive from my site-specific practice, and by the chronological stages of the research.

Through the process of writing about my spatial practice, I became aware that the changing positions I occupied in relation to my work as both artist and observer, from a phenomenological and ideological as well as a private and public point of view, have informed my way of thinking. As a result, this thesis has been an exploration not only of the phenomenological impact of my site-specific installations, and of my position as artist in relation to them and the spatio-temporal situations they articulated, but also of the site of writing and its effect over time. Hence, the thesis composed of a series of texts developed over the past ten years, some newly written and others completely transformed, has located me in a special position in relation to my practice and my writing.

The task of writing the thesis was to set up an equivalence with my artwork that does more than simply 'mirror its object' (Schreyach 2008: 6), instead converting the authentic or original experience of an encounter with my practice, into one that has value for other perspectives. My thesis therefore constitutes a 'site-writing', which, as Jane Rendell has written, 'aims to put the sites of engagement with art first'. For Rendell, these sites of engagement with art include 'the sites – material, emotional, political and conceptual – of the artwork's construction, exhibition and documentation, as well as those remembered, dreamed and imagined by the artist, critic and other viewers.'<sup>4</sup>

In the case of my thesis, this site-writing therefore constitutes a transitional site, both material and conceptual, and has been developed in response to the changing sites of my installations. Similar to a threshold, my thesis is located spatially and temporally between the installations' two stages (the initials and the installations deriving from their documentation for the viva),

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<sup>4</sup> Extract from Rendell (2008) where she suggests that writing is the site of building, design and thinking.

thereby configuring and reconfiguring the relationship between itself and my practice. Finally, the theoretical aspect of my thesis has provided me with a chance not only to reflect on my practice as finished work, but also to imagine something different: to transform rather than describe it.

The chronology of my research has offered me the opportunity to spend an extended period considering past installation practice. My site-specific installations situated in the contemporary cityscape of Athens, either indoor (*Central Corridor* (2003), *In Site Compression*, (2007)) or in outdoor space (*Seven Windows...* (2004)), had an important potential for me, as vehicles for a raised consciousness about the city's condition. Athenian society is heterogeneous and unstable, especially since the start of the economic crisis in Greece (2010) and the arrival of political refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq since 2011, and from Syria since 2014. At the time they were created, my installations were mostly concerned with redefining spatial situations and structural components, by transforming the locations for which they were created rather than just occupying them. They were also intended to make connections visible, by exposing the social and cultural agendas of the city, along with contradictory notions such as proximity and distance, stasis and motion, private and public, confinement and liberation, as these exist in the Athenian cityscape. Moreover, the notion of the collective manifested by the shared contemporaneity, in the space proposed by the installations played an important role, manifesting in its turn both the heterogeneity and contradictions, as well as the simultaneity, of the participating subjects and objects, without seeking to resolve or unify their differences.

The arrival of refugees has increased the number of homeless people in the centre of Athens. As a result, a lot of abandoned private and public spaces have become places of memory rather than lived places for those citizens who felt obliged to move elsewhere. To this characteristic quality is added the notion of 'wrong place', signifying a place of transience that exists in all big cities around the world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See p.16.

These shifts in political context in Athens have transformed my thinking about my practice, which now points to another set of contradictions embodied in the experience of my site-specific installations: presence and absence, isolation and community, imaginary and real. In my thesis I also argue for the possibility of a continuity between the perceived real space articulated by my installations and an imagined one, resulting from the viewer's cognitive function overlaid onto the phenomenological experience of each installation's real spatiality, which is also informed by the contemporary political condition of Athens.<sup>6</sup> As a result, and due to its particular chronology, my research process has become a space to rethink my practice critically and in depth, making me aware of elements I might have overlooked, and which have added to its ceaselessly transient nature.

As theoretical practice, my thesis is framed by a dialogue between the primary and secondary material; that is, between

- documentation of my site-specific installations (the closest firsthand evidence of my work)
- observations concerning the creation of my site-specific installations, involving description of my artistic response to specific sites
- an account of the original thinking for the creation of my site-specific installations
- my experience of the installations' impact on viewers during their temporary exhibition
- texts written with the benefit of hindsight, after exhibition of the site-specific installations had ended and they had been removed
- ideas from contemporary art and philosophy, such as the writings of Marc Augé, Nicolas Bourriaud, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty
- writings of artists such as Dan Flavin, Dan Graham, Robert Irwin, Gordon

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<sup>6</sup> See pp.106–7.

Matta Clark, Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Rachel Whiteread and Ken Wilder

- writings of critics such as Claire Bishop, Nick Kaye, Rosalind Krauss, Miwon Kwon, and Judith Rugg, which are central to the theoretical framing of my research.

Quotations from theorists discussing a specific work of art have often provided me with the 'commonplaces' (in Greek - κοινοί τόποι - 'koinoi topoi')<sup>7</sup> between my practice and that of other artists, and have enabled me to apply these ideas to my own work.

The specific chronology and stages of my research resulted in mixing primary with secondary material, which in some cases confused the distinction between the two. My thesis therefore offers an analysis of the primary as well as the secondary material for the final exhibition of my viva. Hence, instead of constituting solely secondary material, the documentation of the initial installations has been used as the medium for the creation of new site-specific installations, which established their own spatio-temporal frame and aimed to provoke perceptions among viewers that differ from those caused by the initial works.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The term *topoi* (from the Greek for 'place' is a metaphor introduced by Aristotle to characterise the 'places' where a speaker or writer may 'locate' arguments appropriate to a given subject. A *metaphor* is a figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something in common.

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle characterises the *topos* as a general argument source and template, from which many individual arguments can be constructed. The word τόπος (*tópos*, literally 'place, location') is also related to the ancient memory method of 'loci', by which things to be remembered are recollected by mentally connecting them with successive real or imagined places.

'In the *Rhetoric*, in Books I and II, Aristotle talks not only about 'common topics' that can generate arguments for any kind of speech, but also 'special topics' that are useful only for a particular kind of speech or subject matter. Because the discussion is dispersed, it is sometimes hard to determine what each kind of topic is.' (Bizzell and Herzberg 2000: 3).

<sup>8</sup> See pp.131–133.

## ***Seven Windows Divided by Two, 2004***

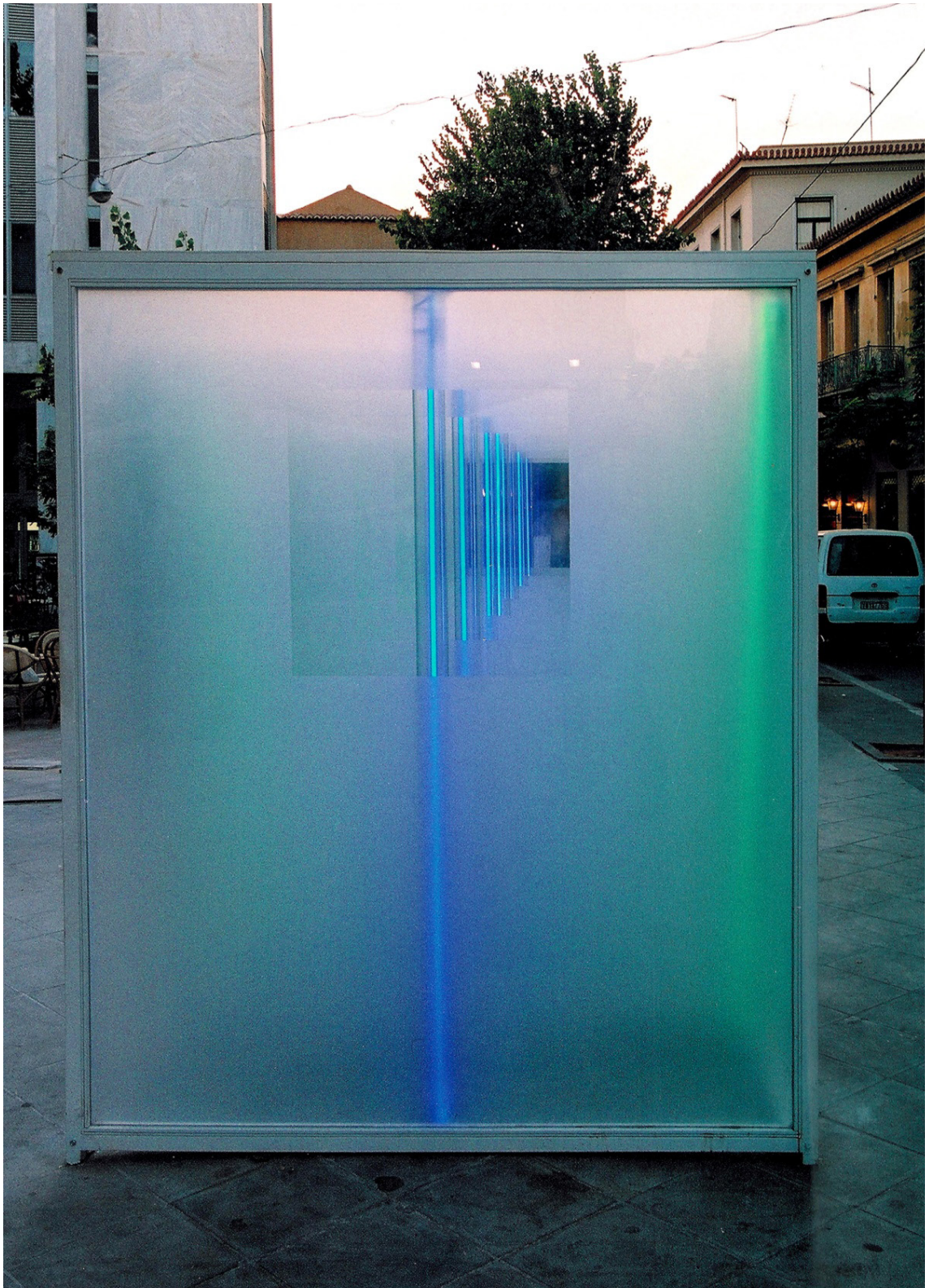


Fig. 8. Unless otherwise indicated, all images in this chapter depict the installation *Seven Windows Divided by Two*, 2004, Demopratirion Square, Athens, aluminum, acrylic, neon lights, 2.10 x 5.40 x 1.85 m

## **Inter-related orders of space and temporality**

‘ΑΘΗΝΑ by ART’ was an exhibition organised by the Municipality of Athens Cultural Organisation in collaboration with the Art Critics Association (AICA Hellas), to accompany the Athens Olympic Games (2004). Its intention was to spotlight the contemporary Greek cultural scene. Fifteen curators invited approximately 100 contemporary Greek artists, who installed 83 works in public spaces over most of Athens, which was at that time a city in celebration. For Efi Strouza (president of the board of AICA Hellas), this exhibition in the urban environment of Athens aimed not only to ‘incite viewers to discover the “little utopias” that art is capable of creating in every time and space,’ but also to ‘convey to the public the energy that emanates from a creative approach to the urban and historical environment’ (Daniylopoulou, O., et al 2004: 21–2).

When I was invited by Lina Tsikouta (art historian and curator at the National Gallery) to create an installation for Demopratirion Square, located in the historical centre of Athens, I had to confront the specific conditions of the location and any others that were important for me. The installation would have to draw its *raison d’être* from the surroundings, which required a careful reading of the site, as inspecting the space and taking accurate information is fundamental to my method. Consequently, I spent time observing and walking around the site and adjoining areas, considering entry and exit points and the character of the surrounding city. Pertinent questions were: what is the site’s relation to applied and implied systems of order, architecture, use, distance, and sense of scale? What are the characteristics of movement and light? What is the physical and people density, the sound and visual density? What was/is the prior and current use of the location?

Situated below under the Acropolis and the Parthenon (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the location bears the weight of ancient Greek inheritance, which occupies an important place in the minds of Greek people. The location is also in the centre of Plaka, one of the oldest and most famous neighbourhoods of Athens. Constructed at the end of the 19th century as a residential area, Plaka consists of labyrinthine streets filled with small neoclassical houses, and

has remained untouched by the general ‘demolition and disruption of parts of the city to make way for the global spaces of modernity and the controlling effects of redevelopment’ (Rugg 2010:161). The neighbourhood is therefore unique in the new architectural infrastructure of the city, but despite its location in the heart of Athens, and the fact that its architectural character is reserved, its function is close to that of the amusement parks or malls usually situated in peripheral urban spaces, as it provides opportunities for leisure and is a site of high tourist interest. Located at the edge of this area, and inside the commercial centre of Athens, Demopratriou Square, though restricted to pedestrians only, is very busy and noisy, since it is used by large numbers of people including tourists, either passing through on their daily commute or strolling, shopping or sitting in the restaurant or cafes.



Fig. 9. Monasteraki, Demopratriou Square, Athens. Photograph: V. Christouli

The physical characteristics of *Seven Windows Divided by Two* (physicality, dimensions, materials, details, etc.) were determined by my direct experience of the site, since for its creation I took under consideration all the parameters

that identified the specific location: 11 rectangular panels of acrylic panels in a continuous aluminum frame measuring 2.10 x 5.40 x 1.85m, configured in a Greek meander pattern.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 10. Antimenes Painter, Attic black-figure amphora (details with meander pattern), c.520 BC

The whole construction was divided into six units of three sides each, two of 1,85m wide, and a narrow plate of 0,90m wide at the end. On the diagonal axis of each of the six narrow plates, a line of green neon light was positioned, which was further strengthened by the change in colour (transparent-green and transparent) of the two triangular Plexiglas plates of which the panel was composed. The seven wider rectangular panels, which formed the long side of each unit, were constructed from semi-transparent acrylic planes. These acrylic surfaces contained a small rectangular transparent space (50 x 50 cm) 150 cm from the ground, to form a kind of 'window'. Each 'window' was further divided into two equal parts, from top to bottom, by a blue, neon, light vertical line. By attempting to reposition the viewer's relationship to the surrounding urban environment, *Seven Windows...* proposed a space 'of contestation that reconceptualize[d] the city as maintained by the tenuous constructions of tourism, "heritage culture", urban planning and other processes of commodification' (Rugg 2010: 49). The installation thus created a series of oppositions and spatio-temporal conditions that sustained a fragile balance of contradictory notions, such as private/public, visible/invisible, temporary/permanent.

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<sup>9</sup> A meander is a decorative border constructed from a continuous line shaped into a repeated motif. As Karl Kerényi has pointed out, 'the meander is the figure of a labyrinth in linear form' (Kerényi 1976: 89). Meanders are common decorative patterns in many ancient Greek architectural friezes and vases from the Geometric Period.



Fig. 11

### **Walking in the city and the notion of ruins**

Surrounded by historical buildings and monuments, *Seven Windows...* had to be incorporated into the everyday life of the city. People traversing Demopratirion Square would come into contact with it by chance, unaware of its presence, without having planned to visit a work of art, so the installation had to be designed to attract their attention.<sup>10</sup> Therefore its physical presence and the way it was positioned in the square had to intervene in their actions and their line of walking, by offering its own spatial parameters, such as near and far, here and there.

In the city, the walker experiences site in a transitive sense, in the act of locating or passing through, but not the settled order of the location itself. The urban landscape shelters thousands of discrete operations that are transformed,

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<sup>10</sup> My intention was that the installation would create a condition in which intention (i.e. a pre-decided route) is given up, a condition leading to approaching life through attention. As defined by Merleau-Ponty (2002: 35), 'Attention is...the active constitution of a new object which makes explicit and articulate what was until then presented as no more than an indeterminate horizon.' Since 'internal experience is possible only as things and elements borrowed from external experience', the images revealed by our attention depend on who we are and what we are looking for. Based on the above thoughts, the intention was that my installation, by attracting/inviting passers'-by attention, would allow them to come closer to life and enjoy some kind of contemplative, internal experience.

in Michel de Certeau's words, into 'an opaque and blind mobility' within the limits of the city (De Certeau 1984: 93). In the city, apart from rushed movements, is born and lives this 'chorus of idle footsteps', also described by De Certeau as 'a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation', which is woven together with imaginary paths formed by the movement of pedestrians. These paths are not static, nor permanently defined or localized, but, rather, in a condition of perpetual transformation and give identity to the places they traverse; or, in other words, 'give their shape to spaces' (De Certeau 1984: 97). *Seven Windows...*, however, offered its space for the creation of new imaginary paths, which, although not part of the initial geography of Demopratirion Square, added to all the other paths created by pedestrians in the area. The walkers, as the incarnated elements of these movements, constituted in relation to their position, both a near and a far, a here and there, which at times interweaved with, and at others opposed, the installation's conditions of near and far, here and there, as determined by its relation to the space. The act of walking, 'the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper', transforms the impersonal urban landscape into a disquieting familiar proper place for walkers (De Certeau 1984: 103),<sup>11</sup> although the spreading movement of figures cannot be captured in an image or fixed in a certain place. My ambition was that *Seven Windows...* could play the role of a space, where the steps of walking figures intersected in a 'pause', which potentially offered a 'proper' place for them.

The installation's size, which required viewers to stand some distance to obtain a total view, contrasted with the intimacy offered by its division into six units. The installation therefore had a double function: large enough to preserve its autonomy and be part of the city, it also created a sense of intimacy that allowed viewers to find a degree of privacy within its parameters. Those who chose the one or the other side of its meander shape to approach it realised that, in order to reach the space behind it, they had to perambulate around it since it consisted of a one-piece construction.

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<sup>11</sup> For a further definition of 'proper' versus 'wrong place', see Introduction, 'Site and mobility', pp. 15–6.



Fig. 12

Consistent with the tradition of Minimalism that underlines the importance of movement around the work of art and the relationship between the work, the viewer and the site, *Seven Windows...* was designed to invite viewers to

explore it in its entirety. As such, it recalls the intentions of Héli Oititica, for whom the meaning of his works was the viewer's process of physically 'penetrating' it. His 'Penetrables', initially produced in model form, used panels of colour to create temporary-looking architectural structures. *Tropicalia* (1967), the first of his environments to be realised, comprised a labyrinth structure, which could be perceived only 'after the complete moving disclosure of all parts, hidden one from the other, [as] it is impossible to see them all simultaneously' (Oititica et al in Bishop 2005: 136). My intention was that *Seven Windows...* should not be perceived as an accumulation of immobile 'sculpture' elements or 'static events' that unfolded and resided in this particular site. Instead, viewers moving around the work would achieve the synthesis of two parameters through the act of its active perception.



Fig.13

The first parameter involved issues of distance and scale, and encompassed the notion of simultaneity and coexistence, so referred strongly to the notion of time. As Merleau-Ponty has written, our perception of the presence

of objects and of the relationship between them extends in two dimensions: '...the here–there dimension and the past–present–future dimension. The second elucidates the first' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 309). The here–there dimension in *Seven Windows...*, depending on the viewer's awareness of the distance that separated him/her from various elements of the work, changed according to their position. The various surfaces of the installation, which unfolded angles where viewers could stand, were linked from one to another in a time sequence and activated them to explore and spend time, whether walking or standing. Deriving from the juxtaposition of the location, the installation and the viewers moving around it, these multiple views also created a sense of simultaneity and coexistence, which strengthened the connection between time and space in the experience of the installation.

The second parameter related to the significance of the human body and its movement in space. The body of the viewer in the space circumscribed by the work ceased to be another thing in objective space, the body as it in fact is, and instead was converted into 'a virtual body, with its "phenomenal place"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 291) defined by its situation and possible actions. The viewer's condition in relation to the different elements of the work – the vertical and horizontal, near and far – which included countless possibilities for changes in their position, was one of motion, though the work's orientations were not necessarily the same as the viewer's. Called to inhabit the relationships opened by the work, viewers could choose to be wherever there was 'something to be done' for them. Then potentially, there was developed 'a certain possession' of the installation by the viewer's body and 'a certain gearing' of the viewer's body to the situation imposed by the installation (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 291), strengthening the dynamic relationship between the 'space of the visitor' and the 'space of the installation'. The ambiguous boundaries between these spaces, which was enriched by their relationship to the 'space of the square' where the installation was located, caused a constant change and mobility in the viewer's perception of the installation. This sense of mobility, which is familiar to citizens of big cities and would normally prevent viewers from

conceiving it as a 'place' or 'being fully present in it' (Augé 1995: 68), was modified during their immersion in one of the installation's six units.

Each of the six divisions of *Seven Windows*... was slightly smaller than the size of a public telephone box, meaning that it was big enough for viewers to enter and small enough to create a sense of intimacy. When entering one of these semi- units, the viewer would feel disconnected from the surrounding sounds of the city and its sequences of 'phatic topoi',<sup>12</sup> which constitute its mobile organicity (the quality of perpetual changes and unpredictability associated with living organisms), a feature created by walkers in the environment. This mobile organicity is intensified nowadays by people talking into mobile phones, which has converted private conversations into public performances.

The serial articulation of the six units of *Seven Windows*... also produced a rhythmic architectural statement, which in itself might have helped slow down the velocity of the crowd and allow space for self-reflection. Another, diagonal, rhythmical statement was created by the green neon lights positioned on the narrow side of each small unit. These diagonals were not, like Dan Flavin and Donald Judd's work, used to avoid the 'compositional arrangement' that distinguished earlier geometric art such as that of Piet Mondrian or Stuart Davis (Glaser 1985: 154–5), but to break up the vertical units and direct attention to other aspects of the work besides its serial composition. The effect of their multiple reflections in the acrylic plates, together with those of the surrounding environment and people, incited a further sense of disorientation among viewers, which enhanced the opposition between the work's public dimensions and the paradoxical privacy of contemplative experience that this structure solicited, as a result of the human scale, intimate space, that of each of its six units.<sup>13</sup> The installation thus proposed a new spatiality with a double function. The first was that of intervening in the streams of commuters and pedestrian traffic passing through Demopratiriou Square, which not only changed the

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<sup>12</sup> The Greek word 'phatic' (meaning orally pronounced) followed by the term 'topoi' (meaning space) implies the function of terms that 'initiate, maintain, or interrupt contact, such as "hello", "well, well", etc...' (Michel de Certeau 1984: 99).

<sup>13</sup> See Buchloh's analysis of how analogous oppositions are experienced (Buchloh 2002: 14).

directions and velocity of pedestrians' movements, but also invited a voluntary 'stasis' from their activities, which could be regarded as generating some kind of 'emancipation from the repetition and alienation of the everyday'.<sup>14</sup> The second function was the effect of the viewers' immersion in one of its six units, which 'asserted the humane against the international, abstract aspirations of the [c]ity' (Rugg 2010: 55). By merging the installation units' spatiality with that of the body of the viewer, *Seven Windows...* invited identification with lived space and – by providing the possibility of intimate moments – also allowed the individual to experience a sense of self rather than 'homogenization...within [the city's] dehumanized and alienating spaces'. It thus 'reassert[ed] the body itself as space-producing' (Rugg 2010: 55).

The meaning of every artwork changes according to the time the viewer devotes to its perception, as expressed by Michel de Certeau, who has written that 'the artwork is inhabitable in the manner of a rented apartment' (cited in Bourriaud 2002b: 24). When it comes to site-specific installations like *Seven Windows...*, the length of time a viewer spends with the work depends on their

<sup>14</sup> In analysing Mark Lewis's *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside, EC2*, 2006 (a fixed camera view of the inverted shadows cast on the pavement by the constant stream of pedestrians, passing along Cheapside in the City of London), Judith Rugg (2010: 54) has written: 'The dislocation of the displacement of the body suggested its unseen presence elsewhere.' For Lefebvre, this is 'the basis on which we can find self-fulfillment and emancipation from the repetition and alienation of the everyday'. Lewis's work suggested that the world of work diminishes the self to a mere shadow, whilst our real selves exist somewhere else...' In *Seven Windows ...*, however, instead of the body's displacement through its representation by the immaterial projection of its shadow-figure (as occurred in Lewis's work), another kind of 'displacement' was caused, due to the viewers' temporary escape from their routine route through their bodily incursion in the spatiality proposed by the work; this displacement could be verified by their own awareness of this interruption in their everyday actions.

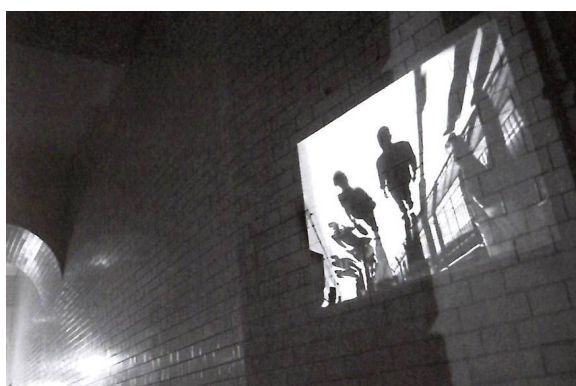


Fig. 14. Mark Lewis, *Rush hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside, EC2*, 2006, Prudent Passage, City of London, video projection, filmed in 35mm and converted to video. Photograph: Richard Davies

relationship with it, which necessarily varies with each person. It is also difficult to know whether viewers are affected by the movement of other people around them. The imaginary 'lines' representing their trajectories 'refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by' (De Certeau 1984: 97). These trajectories, as temporal movements of people through space, consist only of a 'succession of points through which [viewers] pass' (De Certeau 1984: 35) at a particular moment in a specific amount of time. However, when a trajectory is 'drawn' around an installation, time and movement can be immediately read by the eye, as if someone had projected it onto paper.



Fig. 15

This procedure could transform the temporal articulation of viewers' positions into spatial sequences of points and 'paths', which (since it is impossible to go backward in time) exist as 'mark[s] in place of acts', similar to a graph, and link the time spent by the viewers with the space of the installation. Hence *Seven Windows...* enhancing the original relation between trajectory and path, that of an irreversible replacement of an operation by a graph,

transformed the act of walking into a form, with the path-lines marking the intersections pedestrians made with the object. The installation provided the initial reason for the viewers' trajectories, while the imaginary paths, 'a relic in place of performances...the sign of the erasure' (De Certeau 1984: 35), in turn converted the installation into a ruin, a 'negative monument'.

This notion of the negative monument is also associated with the temporary character of the installation. Exhibited for three months, *Seven Windows...* offered an antithesis (despite its 'public' size) to the timeless character of the Parthenon situated above it, by eliminating every feature of permanence and dissolving the sense of continuity normally expressed by monuments. It also dissociated itself from concepts of permanent public art, which, as Judith Rugg has argued, 'has the tendency to rely on its visibility to manufacture relationships of value with architecture and urban space' (Rugg 2010: 2). Moreover, the possible display of the installation in another location in future relates it to 'nomadic practice' (Kwon 2002: 43), which opposes principles of immobility, permanence and unrepeatability. Indeed, the ephemeral nature of the work positioned it in the context of the relationship between being and circumstance, as elucidated by Robert Irwin:

Being embodies in you, the observer, participant or user, your complete genetic, cultural and personal histories as 'subsidiary' cues bearing on your 'focal' attending (experiencing) of your circumstances, again in a 'from-to relation'. Circumstance of course encompasses all of the conditions, qualities and consequences making up the real context of your being in the world. There is embedded in any set of circumstances and your being in them the dynamic of past and future; what was; how it came to be; what it is; what it may come to be. (Irwin 1985: 28)

As a result of its temporary condition, and by manifesting the 'circumstance' of its presence in Demopratirion Square, *Seven Windows...* therefore turned what appeared to be a question of object/no object into 'a question of seeing and not seeing, of how it is we actually perceive or fail to perceive things in their real context' (Robert Irwin, cited in Claire Doherty 2009: 46).



Fig. 16

The installation's reproduction in photography or video, which eliminates viewers' original 'phenomenal' perception despite allowing them to 'revisit' the work, recollects the notion of ruins. The spectacle of ruins leaves an incomplete

impression connected to the ‘impossibility of imagining completely what [the ruins] would have represented to those who saw them before they crumbled’ (Augé 1995: xviii).<sup>15</sup> However, the use of documentation as material for another site-specific installation (and for the purpose of this research) also reverses the notion of ruins since it develops a relationship with time that expresses continuity with the future, while a new installation based on documentary material of *Seven Windows...* would articulate a different set of spatio-temporal relationships.

The photographs of *Seven Windows...*, when exhibited as a new site-specific installation, could potentially make the viewer aware of the ongoing life of the installation, since its status as a static entity would be questioned by the camera’s power to disclose a succession of views that now no longer exist. The photographs’ capture of instants from the continuous movement of the person taking them, and their exhibition in another site, would indicate a break in continuity, not only of the installation’s different views but also of the exhibition site and its relationship with time, and therefore of the work’s site-specificity.

The site-specific installation created by the projection of the documentary video of *Seven Windows...* would, then, demonstrate a series of displacements in the site-specificity of the initial installation. These would include the apparent displacement of the real space of the initial installation to a virtual filmic space, and the replacement of the exterior spatiality of the initial installation by the indoor spatiality of the second. But the most important displacement would be that of the spectator’s position. Instead of being immersed in the real space of *Seven Windows...*’ literal construction, and despite being possibly surrounded by the video projection, viewers of the second installation would be *outside* the space depicted by the representational material of *Seven Windows...* and *inside* the actual space hosting the video. The potential relation between the spectators of the second installation (the ‘external’ audience of the video) and those

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<sup>15</sup> Today, the most contemporary manifestation of monumentality develops another type of relationship with time ‘that will perhaps never arrive but remains within the realms of the possible’ (Augé, 2008: xvii), and that is represented by large-scale contemporary urban architecture. The expression of continuity in time expressed by these ‘modern monuments’ also unfolds in reverse, toward the future.

occasionally appearing in the video depends on the former's actual presence in the real space of the second installation.<sup>16</sup> As Ken Wilder argues about his *Intersection* (2006), and Michael Fried has done about Douglas Gordon's work, both of my installations (the initial and the second one) were intended to 'function as a constant reminder that the entire work not only exists for the viewer but also [...] calls for his or her active engagement throughout the entire duration, the 'real time' of the (gallery) [installation's space] visit' (Fried, cited in Wilder 2012b: 24).



Fig.17. Ken Wilder, *Intersection*, London, 2006, two projections onto acrylic screens that enclose a metal structure, 323 x 83 cm x 4,71m. Installation view in the Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts, London, 2009. Copyright: Ken Wilder

### **The visible and the invisible**

The individual's consciousness of the world's spatiality depends on self-consciousness and the space they occupy in the world, and vice versa, or, as

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<sup>16</sup> The second installation named *After 'Seven Windows Divided by Two 2004'* (2017), was realized on March 2017, on the occasion of the viva exhibition of this research at 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London. See figures 81-92.



Fig. 18

Merleau-Ponty states in his book *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002: 347): 'There is a world for me because I am not unaware of myself; and I am not concealed from myself because I have a world.'

By intervening in the literality of Demopratirion Square, *Seven Windows...* aimed to reveal the discursive registers among the inter-related spatialities of the square, the installation and the viewers themselves. This experience was enhanced by the work's six units with their reflective surfaces and transparent windows divided in two by a vertical, blue neon line. Inside the narrow units the viewer could experience a sense of intimacy and a highly isolated perception on account of the reflective surfaces, which generated a 'guaranteed experience of narcissistic mirroring' (B. H. D. Buchloh 2002: 27). The viewer's perception was thus reflected back to them while at the same time being interrupted by the blue neon lights, which not only divided what was seen through the window but also blurred vision around it, limiting the boundaries between what was visible and invisible. The physical properties of the blue light, its abstract presence and immaterial energy, despite the fact that its source (the neon lamps) had a very specific shape, was intended to alert viewers to 'the question of the substance of existence', as Robert Irwin has described the use of light in his own work (Irwin 1971: 96).

The six units of *Seven Windows...* were therefore meant to generate remoteness among the viewers and at the same time to introduce the problem of other people, as described by phenomenological reflection: 'I discover by reflection not only my presence to myself, but also the possibility of an "outside spectator"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xiii). Elaborating further on the presence of others, Merleau-Ponty highlights the 'internal weakness standing in the way of my being totally individualized: a weakness which exposes me to the gaze of others as a man among men, or at least as a consciousness among consciousness' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xiv).

Similarly, Judith Rugg argues: 'Like the traveller, the spectator develops a self-consciousness as one whose own position is potentially part of the spectacle in which the gaze becomes its own object' (Rugg 2010: 59). *Seven*

*Windows*... allowed viewers to experience the intimacy of human scale inside each of its units, a process that was then reversed by the awareness that they were also exposed to observation by others. This equivocal meaning of the spatial structure of *Seven Windows*... had an expressive value rather than a logical signification, like the presence of 'what is behind my back' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 6–7). As a result, the viewer's position alternated between viewer and viewed, and the installation itself seemed to bear the forms of the unspoken reactions of these same viewers.<sup>17</sup>

Visual contact with others, which modified the viewer's sense of isolation while inside the six units of *Seven Windows*..., was the result of the transparent windows. A window provides a space of radiance and reflection and, at the same time, a new space of contingent confinement.<sup>18</sup> The 'windows' of the installation were open to the view of the city and whoever or whatever might be standing in front or between, such as other people and parts of the surrounding city, but because of the windows' small size only fragments of the urban landscape or other people could be seen at one time.

The perpetual movement of people around the various surfaces of the work allowed viewers to be there with or without others and, despite being in a necessary relation to those that had momentarily disappeared, at times to be distanced from the immediate situation, as if lost. This 'loss of self' is connected with the notion of being among other people *in the present* and is different from the 'loss of self' experienced in traditional works of art, which encourage the spectator to escape from reality by being 'located in a specific time and social

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<sup>17</sup> See Judith Rugg (2010: 59): 'Space is not a passive container and performances of all kinds articulate it as a series of forms of different spatial narratives.'

<sup>18</sup> Rosalind Krauss has delineated the full range of aesthetic and theoretical oppositions that were articulated in the pictorial matrix of the window, from Romanticism to Symbolism, in her essay 'Grids': 'The Symbolist interest in windows clearly reaches back into the nineteenth century and Romanticism. But in the hands of the Symbolist painters and poets this image is turned in an explicitly Modernist direction. For the window is experienced as simultaneously transparent and opaque. As a transparent vehicle the window is that which admits light or spirit into the initial darkness of the room. But if glass admits, it also reflects. And so the window is experienced by the Symbolists as a mirror as well as something that freezes and locks the self into the space of its own reduplicated being. Flowing and freezing: *glace* in French means glass, mirror and ice; transparency, opacity and water.' Rosalind Krauss (1985: 16).

reality occurring only within the architectural frame where the work is presented' (Dan Graham, cited in Bishop 2005: 73). The viewers of *Seven Windows...* responded to this by attempting to communicate with each other – waving, gesturing or, in the case of children, hiding and shouting.

Viewers therefore became aware of sharing space and time with others and of experiencing the work both collectively and in isolation, which imbued their perception with a 'transcendental' aspect. This is different from the transcendental time and place signaled by the plinth or frame of a traditional work of art.<sup>19</sup> What could be called transcendental here was the viewer's spatio-temporal condition of being both isolated from and together with others in the same space. Like the experience of the passage towards the other, or of the space between ourselves and our idol in a mirror (the idol being an-*other* image of ourselves), the installation presented its space as 'the law of being and the law of place...this joyful and silent experience: in a place, to be other and to move toward the other' (De Certeau 1984: 109–10). This effect was further enforced by the 'virtual tunnel' formed by the spatial perspective inside the seven windows, as the result of the successive reflections of the acrylic surfaces onto each other. However, this 'tunnel' also created an unsettling feeling for viewers due to the distortion of the distance between them.

Thus, by multiplying objects and figures, the highly reflective acrylic surfaces of *Seven Windows...* created a series of unique 'landscapes' that differed from those of the cityscape itself. In a 'reversal of the spectacle of

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<sup>19</sup> Ken Wilder in his essay 'The case of an external spectator' questions 'the assumption that painting always presents a self-contained world' (2008: 261). He uses Masaccio's fresco *The Trinity with the Virgin, St John the Baptist and Two Donors in Santa Maria de Novella*, Florence, to argue that such paintings 'draw the surrounding space into their domain, activating the viewer's space and eroding the sharp division between the world of representation and that of an embodied viewer' (2008: 263). He claims that in such works, in the 'continuity...suggested between the depicted space and the physical space' of the place where they are located, can be identified an *internal* and an *external* spectator (2008: 265). The architectural settings of such works – the *internal* being the presence who 'already occupies an unrepresented extension of the "virtual" space' of the picture – is 'fused' with the *external* beholder, implied by the picture, who 'enters that part of the fictive world depicted as being *in front of* the picture surface' (2008: 261). I consider this 'fusion' of the internal and the external spectator, as described by Ken Wilder, similar to the transcendental experience of 'the passage towards the other', in the perception of my installation *Seven Windows Divided by Two*.



Fig.19

the architectural dominance of the city',<sup>20</sup> the acrylic panels instead became spatial membranes, inviting attention on 'trivial' details: fragments of sky, the movements of trees, details of a building, or a running figure, and transforming the work from an object into an arena of perceptual activity.

The reflective surfaces of the installation also opened a dialogue with earlier works whose reflective surfaces were used as devices for experimental perception, such as Robert Morris' *Untitled (Mirrored Cubes)* (1965), or Gerhard Richter's *4 Panes of Glass* (1967). Like them, the installation captured spectators in an environment that 'in its entirety entangle[d] them within a phenomenological process of mirror reflection' (Buchloch 2002: 26), converting their relation with the object to a spatial one of simultaneous collective perception.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Judith Rugg's description of Susan Collins's *Underglow* (2006), which 'invited a reflection on the overlooked' and 'provoked a shift in the way we perceive space by inviting a focus of attention on normally unconsidered spaces...' (2010: 148).

<sup>21</sup> Dan Graham has also created works where people or parts of the surrounding buildings were superimposed on each other in the mirror surfaces. In *Two-Way Mirror Hedge Labyrinth* (1989–



Fig. 20. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Mirrored Cubes)*, 1965, installation view, Leo Castelli, 1965, Plexi-glas, mirrors on wood, four boxes, each 53.3 x 53.3 x 53.3 cm



Fig. 21. Gerhard Richter, *4 Panes of Glass*, 1967, glass and steel, in four parts, each 190 x 100 cm. Collection: Herbert Foundation, Ghent, 65/12

Thus *Seven Windows...* 'topological' space, where its literal spatiality merged with that of Demopratriou Square and was reshaped by the spatiality of the bodies of the viewers who moved in relation to it and to one another, could potentially be regarded as the *tactile* space where 'webs of connections, separations and reconnections contract, extend and produce the shape of space and time'.<sup>22</sup> According to some, as Rugg has mentioned (2010: 56), 'in the global scale of capitalism's financial deterritorialized dimensions, people have become dehumanized in favour of a virtual, digitalized space'. In the space of *Seven Windows...*, however, the accumulation of people contrasted with the hard, architectural infrastructure of the city and with the experience of the city's

91), he tried 'to mix urban greenery elements with elements taken from corporate areas but in a different way compared with the halls in skyscrapers where the greenery is imprisoned inside the building', as he said in an interview with Pietro Valle (Graham, cited in Schwartz, 2005: 49).

<sup>22</sup> I have borrowed this argument from Judith Rugg, who referred to Bruno Latour while analysing Lewis's *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening* (2006). The word *tactile* is used here, in contrast to the *immaterial* topological space proposed by Lewis's work (Rugg 2010: 56).

societal indifference, inciting communication among its viewers and articulating a potential space for the 'recovery of the humane'.<sup>23</sup> In its conjoining, separation and rejoining of bodies, *Seven Windows...* therefore established some kind of social interconnections, while the playful reactions it excited among viewers was proof that 'space is produced and performed through actions that become imbricated within it' (Rugg 2010: 59).



Fig. 22

In addition, against the mundane repetitions of commuting and everyday actions that estrange the individual from the city, *Seven Windows...* drew attention to the fleeting forms of people's figures and the fragments of the surrounding environment reflected in its acrylic planes, which continuously overlapped, receded and merged according to viewers' movements. In this way, the installation was turned into a situational, site-specific invitation to consider the transformation of Demopratirion Square's functionality, from anticipated/rational to unexpected/

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<sup>23</sup> In her analysis on Lewis's *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening* (2006), Rugg investigates the way Lewis's work inserts the 'human' element in the 'dehumanized and alienating' space of Cheapside EC2 where it was projected (Rugg 2010: 54).

irrational, as determined by the unexpected images it offered and the 'social networks and human relationships in a continual *dérive*'<sup>24</sup> that it aroused.

The meaning of *Seven Windows*... had as much to do with the use viewers made of it as with my intentions as the artist. The need for the active participation of viewers in the spatio-temporal situation proposed by it invited them not only 'to fill in the blanks, to choose between possible meanings' (Pierre Levy, cited in Bourriaud 2002b: 88), but also to become aware of the importance of their own presence for its significance. *Seven Windows*... thus offered the potential for altering the perception of space within the architecture of Demopratirion Square, as well as in relation to the city of Athens.

The shape and size of *Seven Windows*... also reversed the mobility of the square through the intimacy offered by its six units, while its sense of confinement was opposed by the communication it prompted among the viewers, which transformed the space into a site of play. Similarly, the contemplative stasis it proposed to viewers was reversed by its sense of temporality and experience of fleeting images. By juxtaposing different spatial lines and moments in time, *Seven Windows*... could be perceived as a 'stage', on which contradictory concepts such as public and private, visible and invisible, present and absent, isolated and social, permanent and temporary, played out.

In a contemporary world of 'supermodernity',<sup>25</sup> characterised by accelerated experiences of time, space and ourselves, which, as Augé argues, 'we have not yet learned to look at' (Augé 1995: 29), *Seven Windows* could be perceived as a transient encounter that offered intimacies based on fragments and discontinuities of space and time.

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<sup>24</sup> The expression is borrowed by Rugg, from her analysis on Lewis's *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening* (Rugg 2010: 54). But while, in Lewis's work, the 'social networks and human relationships' were developed among projected figures (the work) and viewers, in *Seven Windows*... relationships were also developed among the viewers themselves.

<sup>25</sup> Augé defines the situation of supermodernity as an 'excess of time defined by the overabundance of events in the contemporary world, which loads us with the need to give meaning to the present... The second accelerated transformation specific to the contemporary world, and the second feature of excess characteristic of supermodernity, concerns space. The overabundance of space is expressed in changes of scale, the proliferation of imaged and imaginary references and in the spectacular acceleration of means of transport... The third feature of excess by which supermodernity might be defined is that of the ego, the individual...' (1995: 20–9).



Fig. 23

## ***Central Corridor, 2003***

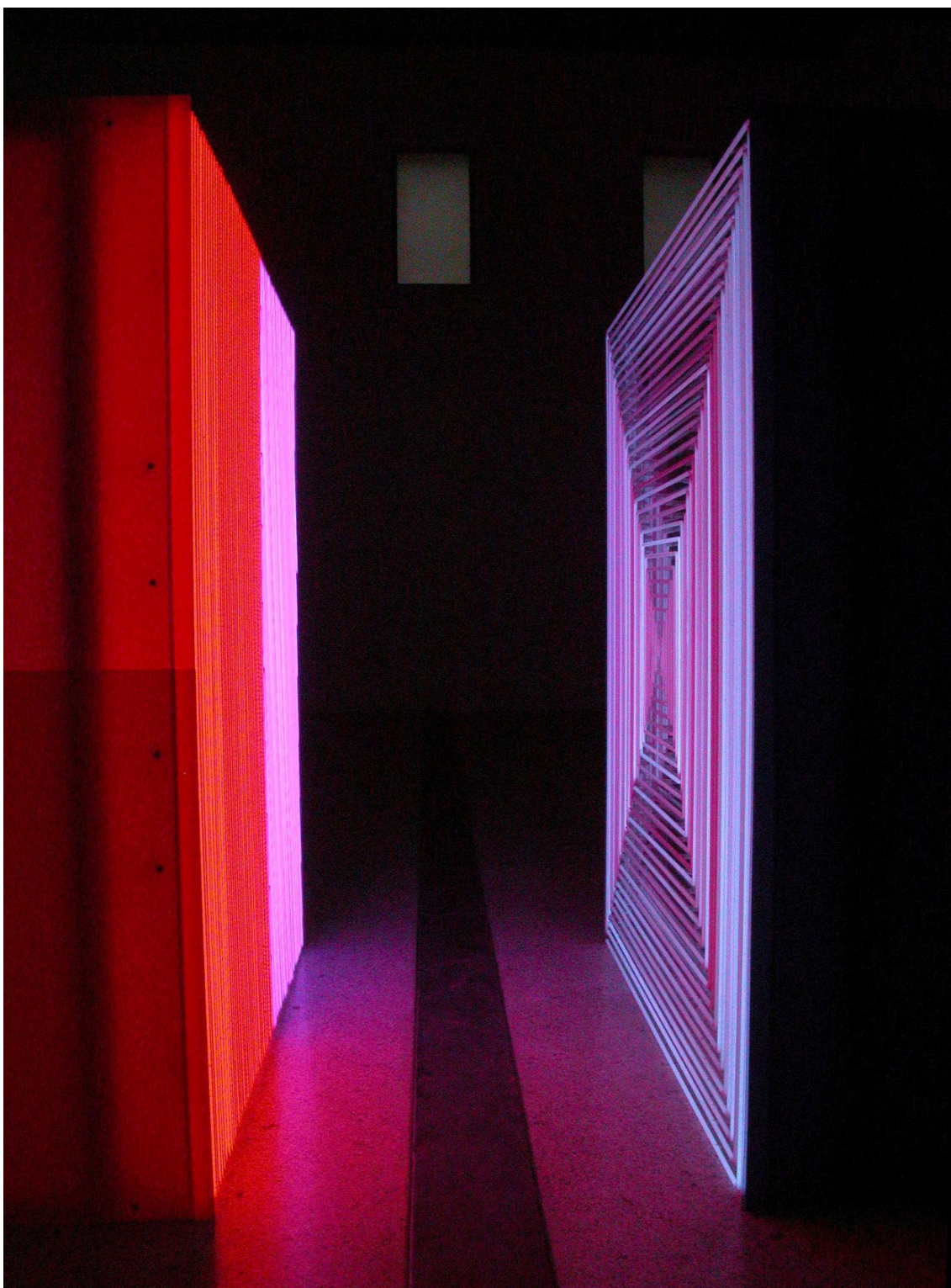


Fig. 24. Unless otherwise indicated, all the images in this chapter are photographs of the installation *Central Corridor*, 2003, aluminum, acrylic, neonlights, 2 elements, each 2 x 2 x 2 m. Sarandopoulos Mills factory, Piraeus, Athens

## **Within the luminous field**

The building of the Sarandopoulos mills factory in Piraeus, the port of Athens, was turned in 2000 into an alternative exhibition space for non-profit exhibitions and events. In late 2003, I was invited by Lina Tsikouta, art historian and curator at the National Gallery in Athens, to exhibit a work there. My work does not involve inserting preconceived or completed objects into a space for exhibition purposes, so inspecting the space and taking notes and compiling accurate information about it is an essential part of my method.

The factory building was constructed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Kaminia, a poor neighbourhood of Piraeus reserved for industrial rather than residential use. Its location near the port of Athens allowed the easy carriage of grain to the flour mills for processing, and the building itself is one of the few in the neighbourhood that has been restored and is surrounded by other industrial buildings, either still in use or abandoned, many of whose broken windows add to the feeling of abandonment. Even though the area is not far from the museums and galleries in the centre of Athens, turnout to exhibitions is low as bus trips are infrequent. As a result, anyone wanting to visit the exhibition has to organise their journey. Meanwhile, the few residents of the area rarely choose to enter the Sarandopoulos space, no matter how well the event is promoted.

The shape of the building is rectangular (7 x 22m), with very high ceilings and three windows at the top of a narrow wall that provide light during daytime. Designed to be large enough to contain the machinery and workers, the space seems huge, especially when empty, while its white walls, industrial concrete floor and aluminum ceiling all create a feeling close to the impersonality of the conventional gallery white cube. Inside the room one can hear the sounds of activities taking place outside.

*Central Corridor* was designed for the specific characteristics of the architectural space and attempted to highlight the effects of the materials from which it was constructed when walking around it. The installation was composed of two Plexiglas cubes (each 2 x 2 x 2 m) with sand-blasted surfaces bearing

coloured geometric motifs, and a 90cm passageway in between. One of the front sides was a red and orange colour, the other was blue-grey; those at the back had a combination of colours arranged vertically, consisting of light green with off-white and off-white with slate-coloured blue. One of the external side surfaces had diagonal grooves, while the opposite one was covered in dense rows of small squares. Finally, the sides along the interior corridor were patterned in neon stripes, which on one side formed a meander pattern and on the other formed vertical lines running side by side. Together, the two cubes created an imposing presence that responded to the geometry of the factory space, while its human-friendly scale connected to Greek tradition and aesthetics.<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 25. Sarandopoulos Mills factory, Piraeus. Photograph: V. Christouli, 2003

<sup>26</sup> In Ancient Greece, the construction of temples used a standard unit of measure based on the harmonious proportions of the human body. Around c.450 BC Polykleitos of Argos created a measure for the ideal human body that he called 'canon', from the Greek word *kanon*, meaning measure, rule and law. The secret of achieving *kallos*, meaning the beautiful, and *eu*, meaning the good, laid down the *symmetria* – the perfect symmetry of all the parts of a statue with each other and the whole. Polykleitos was influenced by the ideas of Pythagoras of Samos (late sixth century BCE) who saw reality in terms of opposing patterns, and by Aristotle who described the Pythagorean polarities/dualities that arose from the underlying unity: limited/unlimited, odd/even, one/plurality, right/left, non-moving/moving, straight/bent, square/oblong (see Leftwich 1988: 68–74). In perpetuating the essentials of Pythagorean philosophy, Plato (427–347 BCE), with his strong interest in beauty and mathematics, held Polykleitos in high esteem.



Fig. 26

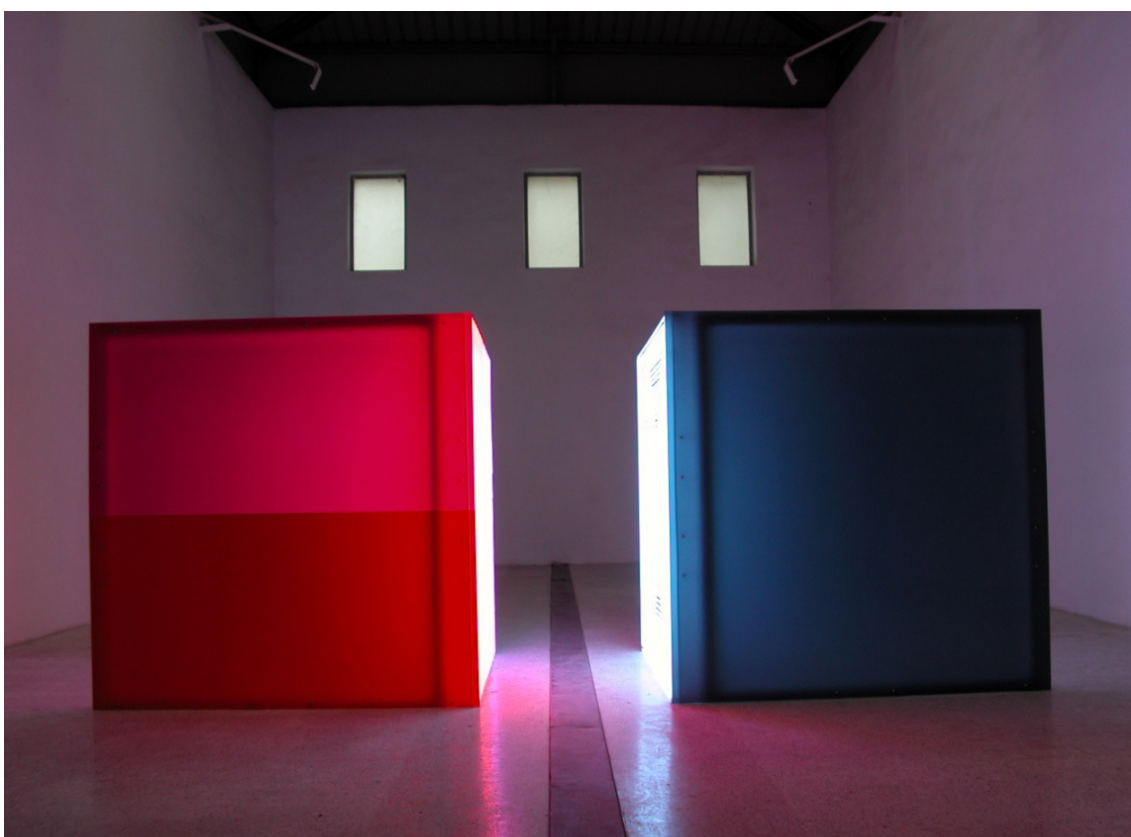


Fig. 27

## Distance, proximity and the body

As the locus of perception, the human body is directly related to space and its parameters. The importance of the interrelationship between the work of art and the viewer is analysed by Rosalind Krauss in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (1977), where she uses Robert Morris's work *Untitled (L-Beams)* (1965) to demonstrate how perceptual experience precedes cognition. The three identical forms in Morris's work could each appear quite different, depending on the relative positions of the work and viewer, 'no matter how clearly we might understand that the three Ls are identical (in structure and dimension)' (Krauss, cited in Bishop, 2005: 54). Clarification by artists and critics in the 1960s of the interdependent nature of a work of art and the viewer, and of the specific aesthetic experience offered by Minimalist sculpture, was based on the theories of Merleau-Ponty outlined in his book *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), in which he writes: 'The thing is inseparable from a person perceiving it, and can never be actually in itself because it stands at the other end of our gaze or at the terminus of a sensory exploration which invests it with humanity' (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Bishop 2005: 50). In *The Primacy of Perception* (1961) he further underlines the importance of the body for the perception of space, writing: 'I do not see "space" according to its exterior envelope; I live it from the inside; I am immersed in it.'

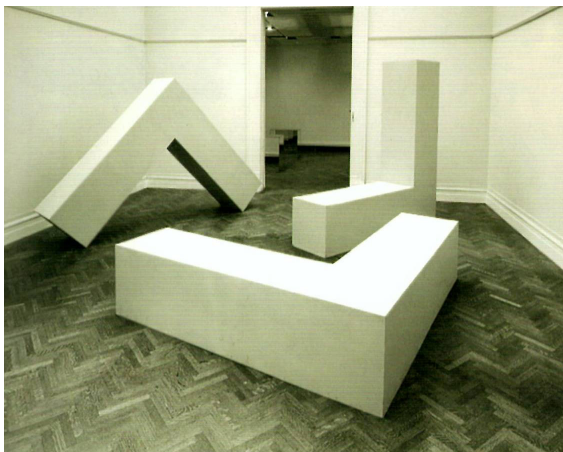


Fig. 28. Robert Morris, *Untitled (L-Beams)*, 1965.  
Collection: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

After all, the world is all around me, not in front of me' (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Bishop 2005: 50). The importance of the viewing subject's movement around the work of art and the relationship between the work, the viewer and the exhibition site, was first proposed by Minimalism, a movement that stood at the intersection of traditional sculpture and installation art.<sup>27</sup>

At about two thirds the length of the room, *Central Corridor* was positioned so that its size and design would allow viewers to follow specific paths when exploring it and to see it from a distance when entering the narrow exhibition space.

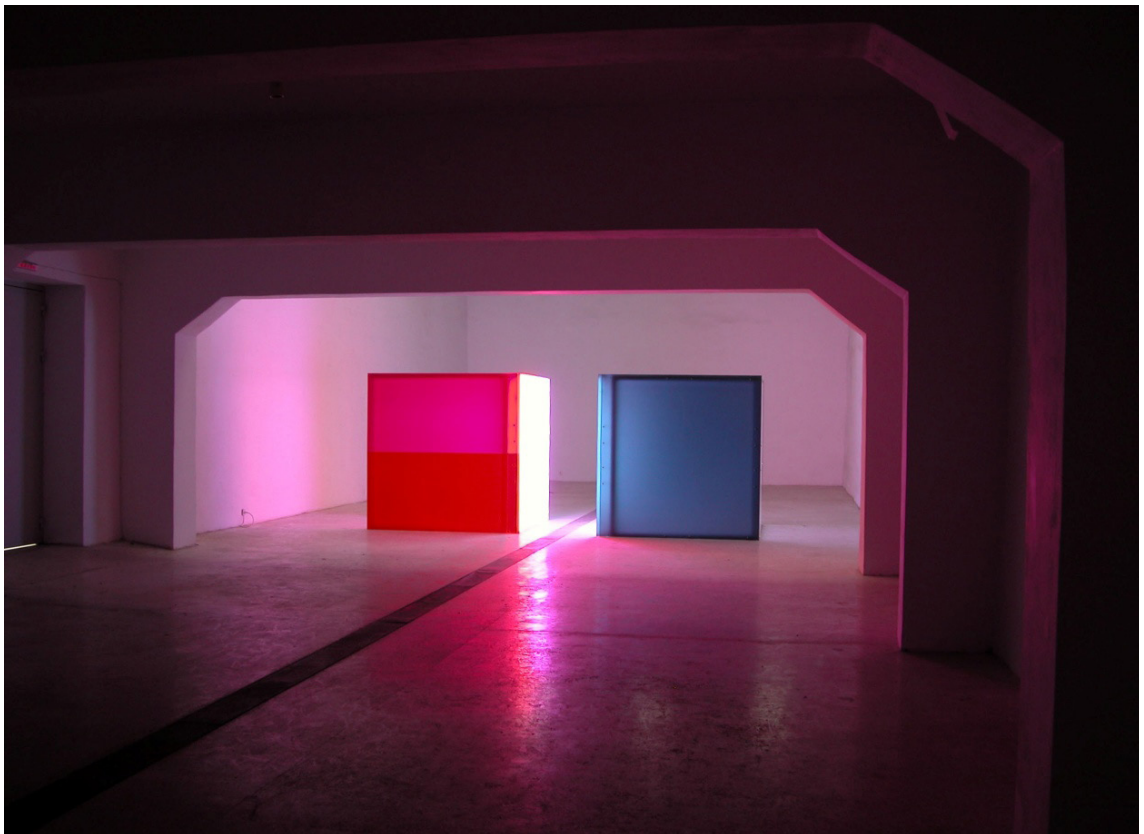


Fig. 29

The two coloured surfaces that viewers saw first when entering the exhibition room were made of Plexiglas; the density of their colour was intensified by light from the corridor walls and seemed to 'hover between painting and object,

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<sup>27</sup> El Lissitzky (1890–1954) was the precursor of installation art. At the 1923 Berlin Art exhibition, he used the small gallery space allocated to him to integrate its architectural elements with his drawings. Lissitzky argued 'space does not exist for the eye only: it is not a picture; one wants to live in it' (Lissitzky, cited in Bishop, 2005: 80). As Claire Bishop has written, El Lissitzky regarded space not as 'a pictorial abstraction but a real arena in which every subject must act' (see Bishop 2005: 1).

between pictorial surface and material relief, between framed painterly perception and unbound architectural vision, between virtual space and actual space', to borrow Benjamin Buchloh's description for monochrome painting.<sup>28</sup>



Fig. 30

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<sup>28</sup> Buchloh considered Malevich and Rodchenko's monochrome panels to be the predecessors of monochrome painting. Malevich's *Black Square* (1913), exhibited in the famous '0.10' exhibition in St Petersburg, established the preconditions for a modernist pictorial dialectic of purification and elimination, while Alexandr Rodchenko's triptych *Red Yellow Blue* (1921) opened.

Their presence directly intervened in the viewer's experience of the exhibition space, not only by concealing what was behind them, but also by preventing easy access to much of the work.

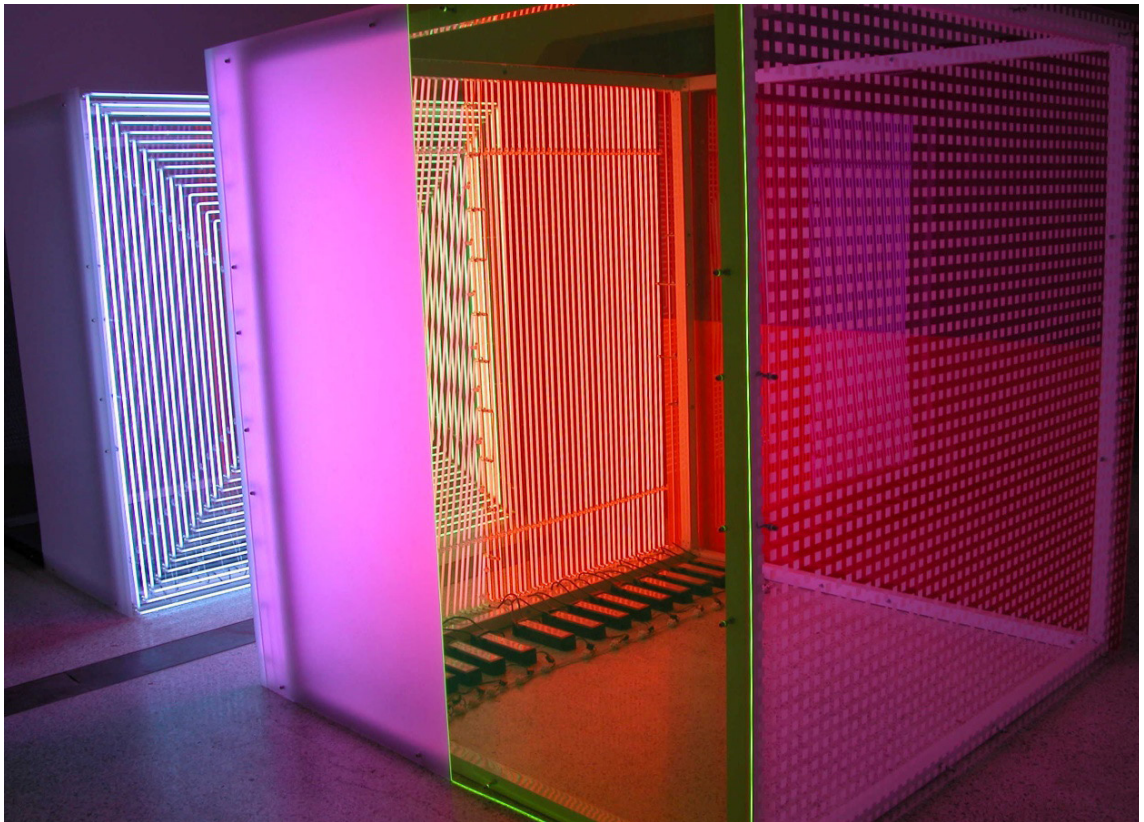


Fig. 31

This was the result of their scale (each surface 2 x 2 m, with a distance of 90 cm between the two cubes), which was in between architectural and human. In his essay 'Notes on Sculpture' (1966), Robert Morris named size as the most important factor, other than the work's literalism, for determining the viewer's relationship with Minimalist objects, which in the case of a large scale dwarfs the viewer and promotes a more public interaction, while a small-scale work encourages privacy and intimacy. Human scale, on the other hand, as Michael

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up the boundaries of the monochrome to real space, by transforming the painterly plane into a chromatic relief. Throughout the 1950s and 60s Ad Reinhardt and Yves Klein, as well as Barnett Newman and Elsworth Kelly, claimed to have achieved an erasure of the past in preparation for future purity, by creating monochrome works that probed 'the purity of negation and the sobriety of withdrawal', as Buchloh has remarked (Buchloh, 2002: 17–18). The monochrome was expanded in the works of Blinky Palermo (*Himmelsrichtungen* (1976) 'Ambiente Arte', Venice Biennale) and Gerhard Richter (*Black, Red, Gold* (1999), Reichstag, Berlin).

Fried argued in his indictment of Minimalist sculpture in 'Art and Objecthood', gave such works 'a kind of *stage* presence', existing like 'the silent presence of another *person*' (Fried 1967:16). The scale of the two cubes of *Central Corridor*, which related to both architectural and human scale, was designed to persuade viewers to walk around them.



Fig. 32

When approaching *Central Corridor*, viewers initially experienced a sense of loss, since they ceased to have an overall view. However, they were compensated for this by a significant gain in intensity. As Gottfried Boehm has written about the experience of Richard Serra's sculptures, 'The quantitative totality of the overall view is replaced by a quality which, paradoxically, results from partial views whose emotional power maximizes our experience in a different way' (Gottfried 1996: 52). But while in Serra's sculptures this power comes from the experience of gravity and the rawness of the materials from which they are constructed, in the case of *Central Corridor* it was generated by that most immaterial of media: light. By circumnavigating the installation,

viewers confronted the fact that it could not be experienced visually alone as it also offered a strong tangible presence when entering the illuminated corridor. Though large enough to accommodate those who wanted to enter it to access the rear of the installation, the width of the corridor was also narrow enough to cause physical unease. This highly illuminated space seemed appealing but also escalated the intensity of the experience through the dazzling feeling it generated while traversing it. My intention was to provide a playful arena for perceptual discoveries during the passage from inside to outside the corridor and to generate a heightened awareness of embodiment. Entering the situation might have made some viewers feel vulnerable or even threatened, but the feeling of being enclosed in the corridor contrasted with the sense of liberation they experienced when exiting. Hence, the movement through the corridor and around the two cubes opened a dialogue between the antithetical experiences of confinement and liberation. All these modes of perception could only be understood as 'integral to the entire body and not the function of a detached gaze upon the world from a centered consciousness', as Bishop has argued about Carsten Höller's work *Light Wall* (2000) (Bishop 2005: 48).



Fig. 33. Carsten Höller, *Lichtwand*, (*Light Wall*), 2000. Several thousand lightbulbs flashing at 7,8 hz. Collection: Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt

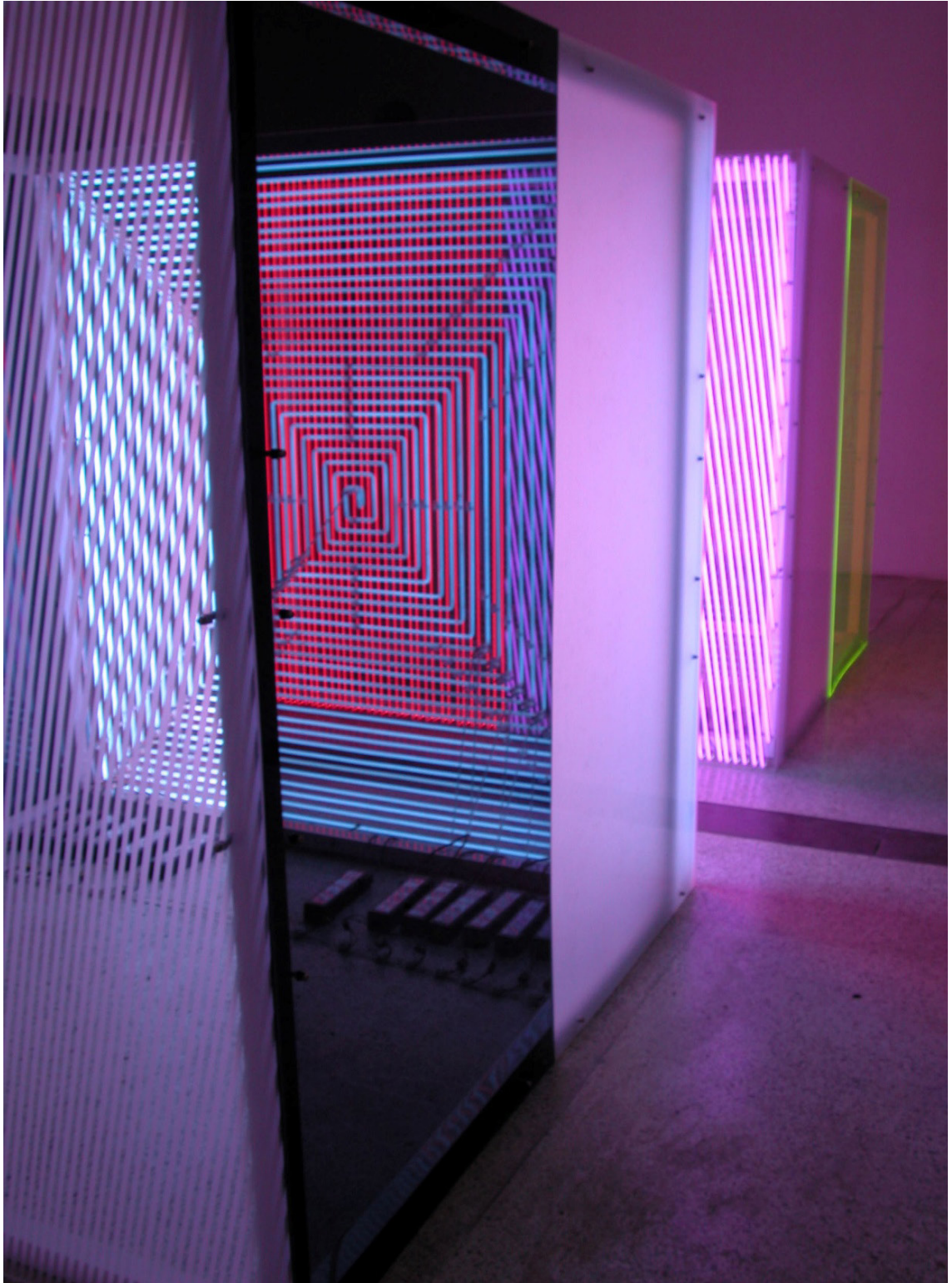


Fig. 34

It was therefore the viewer's proximity to *Central Corridor* that set up a direct connection with the entire body and by touching their physical sensibility, in a way, it downgraded the long-distance supremacy of the optical impact.

Or, in other words, the 'aura' connected with experiencing a work of art from a distance, as identified by Walter Benjamin, was replaced by a field of moving colours and light that appealed to multiple senses. In the case of *Central Corridor* the possibility for auratic distance was also diminished by the diffused quality of the light, which played a unique role in the way the work and the surrounding space were experienced. Despite the geometrical shape of the neon lamps, the coloured light that emanated from them was not confined by the two cubes but illuminated all elements of the interior space – walls, floor and ceiling. Its 'abstract' luminosity, immeasurably pouring around, took the shape of everything it 'touched', including people. This directionless light is also seen in Dan Flavin's works. As Jonathan Crary has written when describing Flavin's *Untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* (1972–73):

Light occurs fully outside of a punctual model of optical phenomena, in which light rays, with a directional identity, emanate like a beam from one point and illuminate another point... It is, however, the directionless quality of Flavin's light – light as an enveloping, immeasurable, and ubiquitous environment – that determines the sensory and psychological impact of his work. (Quoted in Flavin 2000: 34–5)

Dan Flavin himself pointed to the importance of light to bind together object and observer in his work: '[B]y making the space and the on-looker visible, light in a way creates them' (Flavin quoted in Bouisset 1991: 133), and deprives the viewer of '...his sure ground as the *seer*, by rendering him, too, as a possible object' (Plagens, cited in Ragheb 2000: 15). This aspect of the viewer as the object of the installation also demonstrates the importance of the physical presence of viewers for its accomplishment.

The luminous field of the central corridor of the installation, forming an impalpable but incandescent pool of light, also created an obstacle that made it difficult for the viewers to see beyond it. The coloured light emanating from the surfaces of the cubes not only assaulted the eye, but also emitted an oppressive heat, which generated physical unease when close by. Moreover, proximity to the surfaces offered a succession of visual effects, such as points,

lines, planes and colours, and their illusory movement, which could not be experienced from a distance. All these phenomena forced viewers to choose whether or not to pass through the corridor and thus revealed an emancipating dimension to the installation.

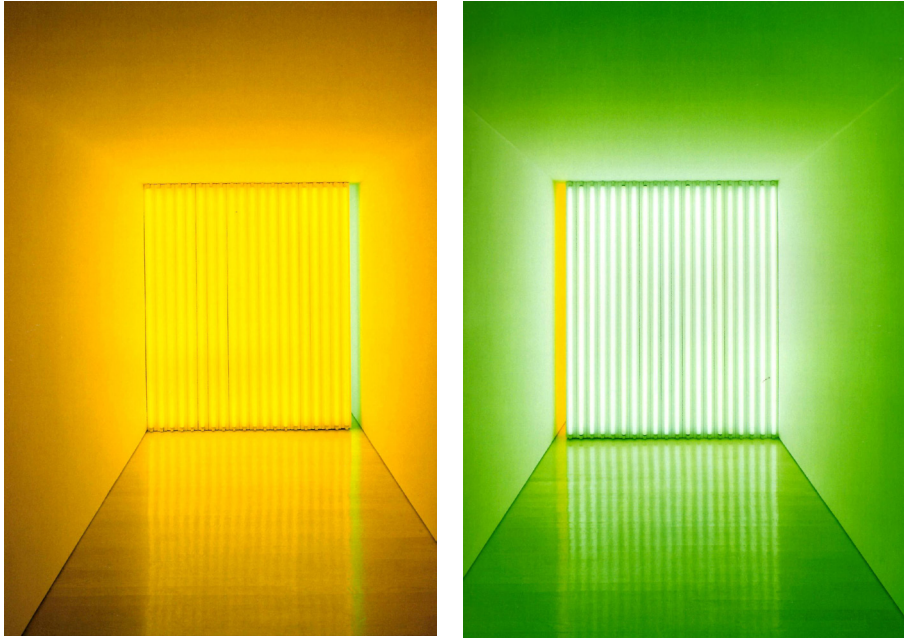


Fig. 35. Dan Flavin, *Untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)*, 1972–73, fluorescent light fixtures with yellow and green lamps, edition 1 of 3, 243.8 x 210.8 x 22.9 cm overall. Collection: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Panza Collection, Gift 91.3708

Finally, the difference between experiencing the work from a distance and close by demonstrates ‘how easily perception can be prised apart and might be far more fragile and contingent than we allow’, as Bishop has written of Bruce Nauman’s installation *Green Light Corridor* (1970–1) (Bishop 2005: 71). Nauman himself has said about his work, in an interview with Michele de Angelus:

My intention would be to set up (the situation), so that it is hard to resolve, so that you’re always on the edge of one kind of way of relating to the space or another, and you’re never quite allowed to do either. (De Angelus 1988: 128)

In the experience of *Central Corridor*, dismantling the boundary between the work’s space and the viewer’s body heightened the immediacy of the confrontation. Antithetical pairs, such as proximity–distance or confinement–liberation, established spatial poles between which the viewer’s perception oscillated.

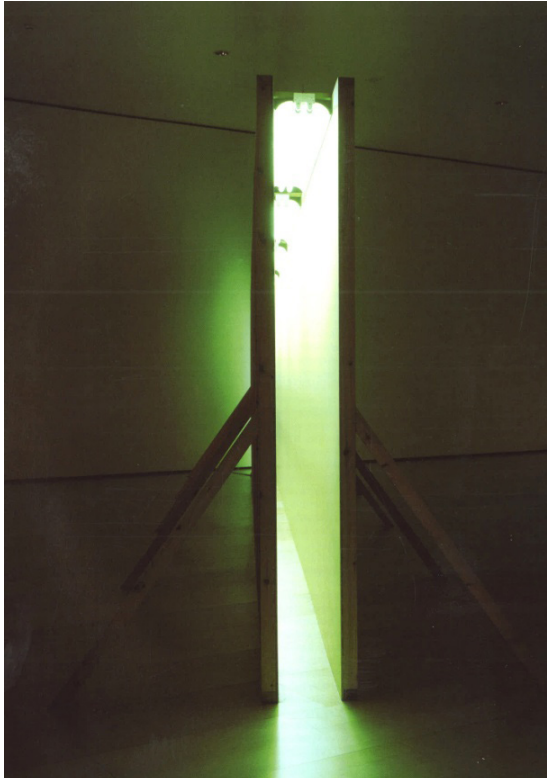


Fig. 36. Bruce Nauman, *Green Light Corridor*, 1970–71. Collection: Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, Panza Collection, Gift 1992

By installing the video documentation of *Central Corridor...* for my viva, there will be articulated *another* site-specific installation, which will require the viewers' renewed participation for both its perception and completion.<sup>29</sup> During my visiting of the actual spaces that might be available for this purpose, I found myself visualising the viewer's perception during their bodily immersion in the situation that will be articulated. In order to describe that kind of procedure, Ken Wilder has written:

As an artist who makes sculptural installations, I frequently imagine my constructions *as if before me*, in the space of the gallery in which the work is to be installed. Here, the visualization is overlaid onto a face-to-face encounter with a real space; it is an imaginative experience where, walking *and* visualizing, I use my body as a kind of datum, to the extent that I am able to make very precise decisions about scale and relative position, something that is impossible to do when I imagine the installation remotely with my eyes shut.

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<sup>29</sup> The installation named After '*Central Corridor 2003*', 2017, was realised on March 2017, on the occasion of the viva exhibition of this research at 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London. See Figs 93–104.

In such situated imaginings...visualization *can* guide action, albeit action that is mediated by the physical experience of the gallery space itself. It can do so because there is an overlap of frames of reference. (Wilder 2008: 276–7)

In an analogous way, but without the need for such a visualisation, I believe that viewers will be activated by their bodily immersion in a situation where the projected compressed virtual space of *Central Corridor*... (in the form of a moving image) will be juxtaposed with the physical reality of the given architectural space. Their perception will then oscillate between another set of antithetical notions, such as stillness and movement, and real and virtual space.



Fig. 37



Fig.38

## Time, movement and theatricality

The connection between a work of art's space and its viewers' movements has been a characteristic of European sculpture since antiquity. When walking around the *Hermes* of Praxiteles, or Michelangelo's *David*, for example, multiple views of the figures merge into a coherent whole. A complete experience of the work therefore consists of a sum of partial perceptions that become refined by moving around it, despite the fact that in both figurative and abstract sculpture there may be 'principal views or preferred directions of access', as Gottfried Boehm has written (Boehm 1996: 62). However, it was Minimalist sculpture and installation art that succeeded in encompassing the whole experience of time spent engaging with works of art.

The different effects of *Central Corridor* could only be experienced temporally. From a distance it seemed to be just an object that offered a counterpoint of colour and warmth to the industrial coldness of the exhibition space. But from close up it gained energy and revealed that the relationship between the installation and the surrounding space was in a state of perpetual change according to the viewer's position. When viewers approached *Central Corridor*, they noticed reflections and shadows of themselves, of other people moving around and of the space surrounding them. The viewers' movements reflected in the work's immaculate monochromatic surfaces – as in a photograph or cinematic image – appeared like passing shadows, leaving no trace behind. As Buchloh has written of Richter's glass paintings (such as *Corner Mirrors* (1991) or *Mirror, Blood-Red* (1991)), these surfaces became a 'spatial and architectural membrane in which spectatorial movement inscribed itself as the primary source of perpetual activity' (2002: 17–19). Even the colour of the surfaces of *Central Corridor* seemed at times to fade under the power of the temporary 'drawings' made by the viewers. This incorporation of fleeting traces of action in the experience of the installation also emphasised the importance of time for establishing a dialectic between the installation itself and the participation of viewers. Multiple visual effects were produced by the juxtaposition of stripes, points and coloured surfaces, seen

simultaneously in front and behind the transparent surfaces, and provoked visual games and confusions. What was experienced across time could not be merged into a whole as the opaque and transparent materials allowed different views to disappear and reappear again. Because of this discontinuity, *Central Corridor* could therefore not be separated from viewers' participation, a fact that supports Claire Bishop's argument that 'everything about installation art's structure and *modus operandi* repeatedly valorizes the viewer's first-hand presence – an insistence that ultimately reinstates the subject (as a unified entity) ...' (Bishop 2005: 130). *Central Corridor* thus incorporated the viewer as a crucial component of the work.

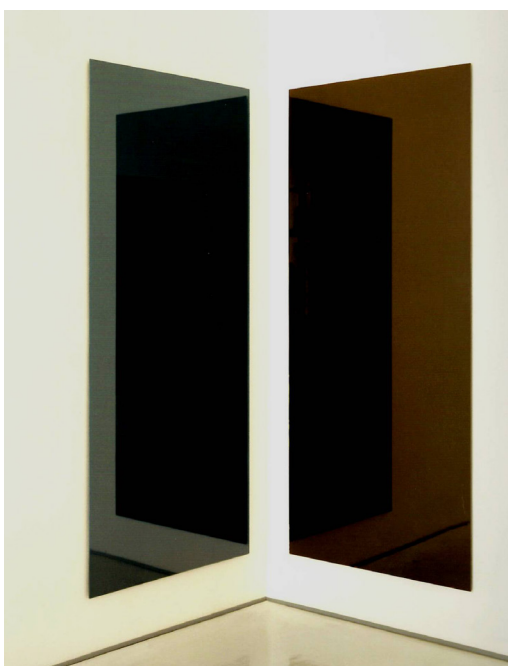


Fig. 39. Gerhard Richter, *Corner Mirrors*, 1971, enameled glass, in two parts, each 225 x 100 cm. Collection: Anthony d'Offay, London, GR 737/1



Fig. 40. Gerhard Richter, *Mirror, Blood-Red*, 1971, enameled glass, 210 x 175 cm. Collection: Martin and Toni Sosnoff, GR 736/1

While *Central Corridor* required the viewer's 'centered' presence in order to experience it, it also set up a situation for the viewer that could be characterised as 'decentring'. As Krauss noticed about Minimalism, viewers did not have a single position of from which to survey the work and their perception changed according the direction in which they moved. The transitional, discontinuous 'spaces in time' created by *Central Corridor*,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The temporal nature of sculpture has been particularly emphasised by Rosalind Krauss (1983: 20–35). See also Gottfried Boehm (1996: 62).

whether experienced by viewers as highly charged or neutral, abolished any hierarchy that could classify viewers' multiple standpoints. Wherever they were, a new field opened up to their perception, and changed their interaction with the geometry of the two cubes (the individual sections of which continually gained prominence and then disappeared) and their relationship with the exhibition space. This constantly changing view strengthened the impression of the work lacking a centre and the 'intellectual notion of dispersed subjectivity (reflected in a world without centre or organizing principle)' (Bishop 2010: 130). The change of the viewer's experience of *Central Corridor* when approaching it from a distance, and the multiplication of vistas, undermined their sense of certainty, in keeping with poststructuralist theories of the 1970s of the decentred subject (Barthes, Foucault, Lacan).<sup>31</sup> A double notion of the viewers as the installation's subject could therefore be described in relation to *Central Corridor*: a self-reflexive, fully present and activated subject (a 'modern' subject), and the decentred one of poststructuralist theory. In other words *Central Corridor* embodied the irresolvable antagonism, as described by Claire Bishop, between the centred and decentred viewer (Bishop 2010: 130–1).

Michael Fried described the literal element in Minimalist art, based on the relation of the artwork to time, as 'theatrical'. In his article 'Art and Objecthood' he writes that, opposed to the 'presentness' of modernist art is 'the literalist preoccupation with time – more precisely, with the duration of the experience [that] is...paradigmatically theatrical: as though theatre confronts the beholder, and thereby isolates him, with the endlessness not just of objecthood but of time...' (Fried 1967: 145). From this point of view, *Central Corridor* certainly entailed an element of theatricality. To this notion of the performative, as developed by Nick Kaye, and the articulation of the bodily incursion of viewers

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<sup>31</sup> Poststructuralism is not synonymous with postmodernism, but refers to a disparate group of thinkers who came to prominence after 1968, particularly in France, and includes Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Francois Lyotard, as well as transitional figures like Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan. Their ideas do not belong to any specific school of thought but can be characterised by a desire to resist grounding discourse in metaphysics, an insistence on plurality and instability of meaning, and an abandonment of the Enlightenment concept of the subject as put forward by Descartes (see Bishop 2005: 134).

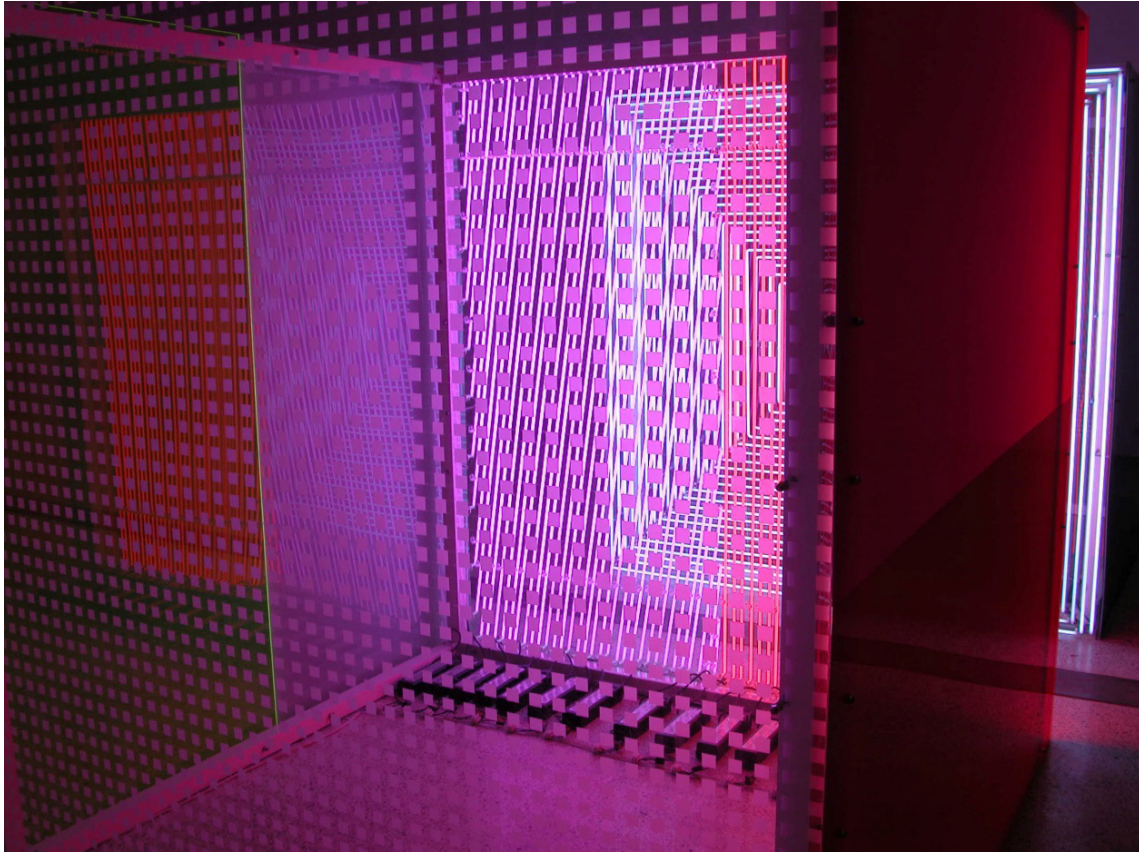


Fig.41

into the site-specific situation of *Central Corridor*, is added another mode of performativity, which ‘concerns the difference between the literal and that which exceeds it’, as described by Michael Newman in the description of Dan Flavin’s *Untitled (to Barbara Nüsse)* (1971) (Newman 2000: 42). Pointing to the difference of the presence of literal light bulbs, and light as an abstract, diffused, almost ubiquitous entity, Newman argues that Flavin’s installations produce what we could call ‘performance’ through a double negation: ‘Flavin negat[es] the readymades’ negation of function – after all, it still lights the room.’ Moreover, by arguing that ‘the paradox of the actor lies not in that she becomes the character, but that in acting she both is and is not the character’, Newman identified such a ‘performance’ as being both reflexive (since it refers to its own conditions of possibility), and exceeding its context (Newman 2000: 42). In *Central Corridor*, the abstract light that gushed everywhere and made visible the exhibition space was generated by neon light bulbs, the mechanisms of which were laid bare inside the transparent cubes. One therefore could say that in this aspect of its

performativity, and in terms of the coexistence of the literal and its excess, *Central Corridor* created a situation where what was delimited was limitation itself.

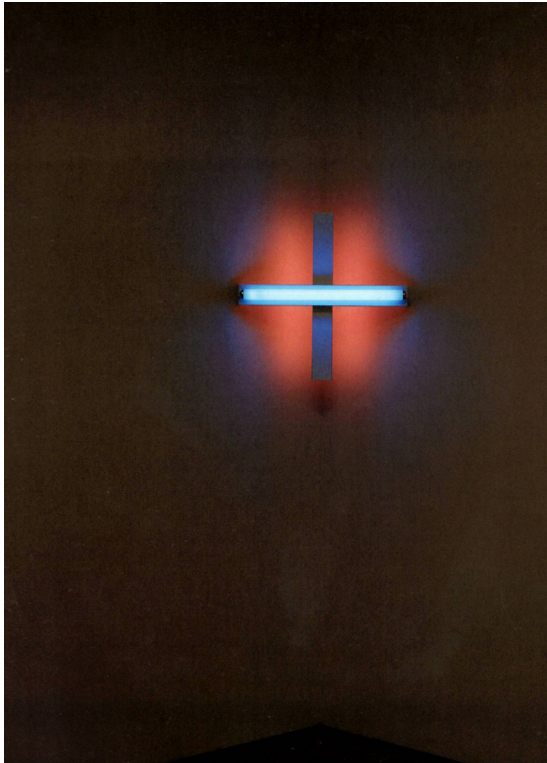


Fig. 42. Dan Flavin, *Untitled (to Barbara Nusse)*, 1971, fluorescent light fixtures with pink and blue lamps, edition 8 of 50, 2 fixtures 61 x 61 x 22.9 cm each. Collection: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Panza Collection, Gift 92. 4118

Finally, the presence of other visitors should not be excluded from the experience of *Central Corridor*, whose movements appeared in the transparent surfaces of the cubes and whose routes at times intersected. What makes us aware of ourselves and of being part of the world is perception of the phenomena that constitute the world, or, in other words, ‘inner perception is impossible without outer perception’, as Immanuel Kant argued in ‘The Refutation of Idealism’ (cited in Merleau-Ponty 2002: xix). This ‘outer perception’ introduces us to the existence of others. *Central Corridor* aimed to provide space where not only ‘the paths of my various experiences intersect, but also where my own and other people’s intersect’, to demonstrate how our awareness of the world is dependent on the relationships of ourselves with things and others (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xxii). But did *Central Corridor* generate any communication between them?



Fig. 43

Whenever more than one person wished to pass through the narrow passageway between the two cubes, the velocity of their movement appeared to slow down. Moreover, the transparent and reflective surfaces allowed viewers to see both the other people moving behind them and their reflections, hence encouraging them to become involved with ‘your seeing, your own gaze and other people gazing at you’, as Dan Graham has said of his installations (Graham, cited in Bishop 2010 :73).<sup>32</sup> As a result, the space articulated by *Central Corridor* was filled with a sense of togetherness and social contact, since the human body, being ‘a tool of measuring space and time’ (Carreri 2002: 148), became the means for perceiving of the installation. Situated in our own bodies here and now, and involved in the world, we are aware of our

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<sup>32</sup> Dan Graham’s interest in the socialised and public premise of phenomenological perception was partly informed, as Bishop suggests, by his reading of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, whose theory in his essay ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I’ (1949) was that the ego is structured as an effect of an external or reciprocal gaze: the world looking back at us (Bishop 2005: 72, 137).

ability to be present wherever we wish. The viewers are as essential to an installation as the room in which it is installed. The need to be physically inside the site-specific installation, the incorporation of time in its perception, and the experience of being among other people, constitute the spatio-temporal boundaries within which the temporality of the viewer meets the temporality of the installation and of others, in the space articulated by the work's literality.



Fig. 44

*Central Corridor's* ever-transforming perception by viewers, which sustained contradictions between proximity and distance, confinement and liberation, stasis and motion, as well as between subject and object, and the self-reflexive and decentred subject (which demonstrated that perception itself can be subject to perpetual changes), potentially provided an opportunity for viewers to question and reframe their relationship with the world in everyday life.

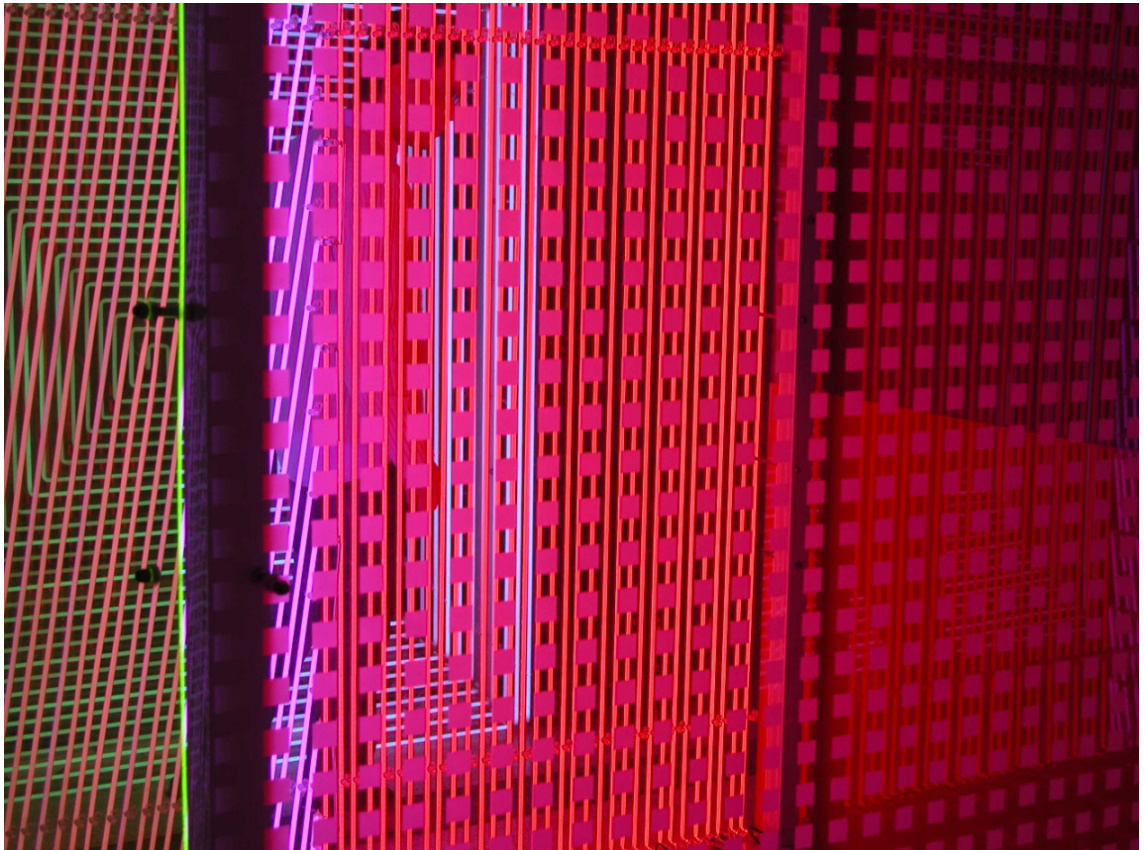


Fig. 45

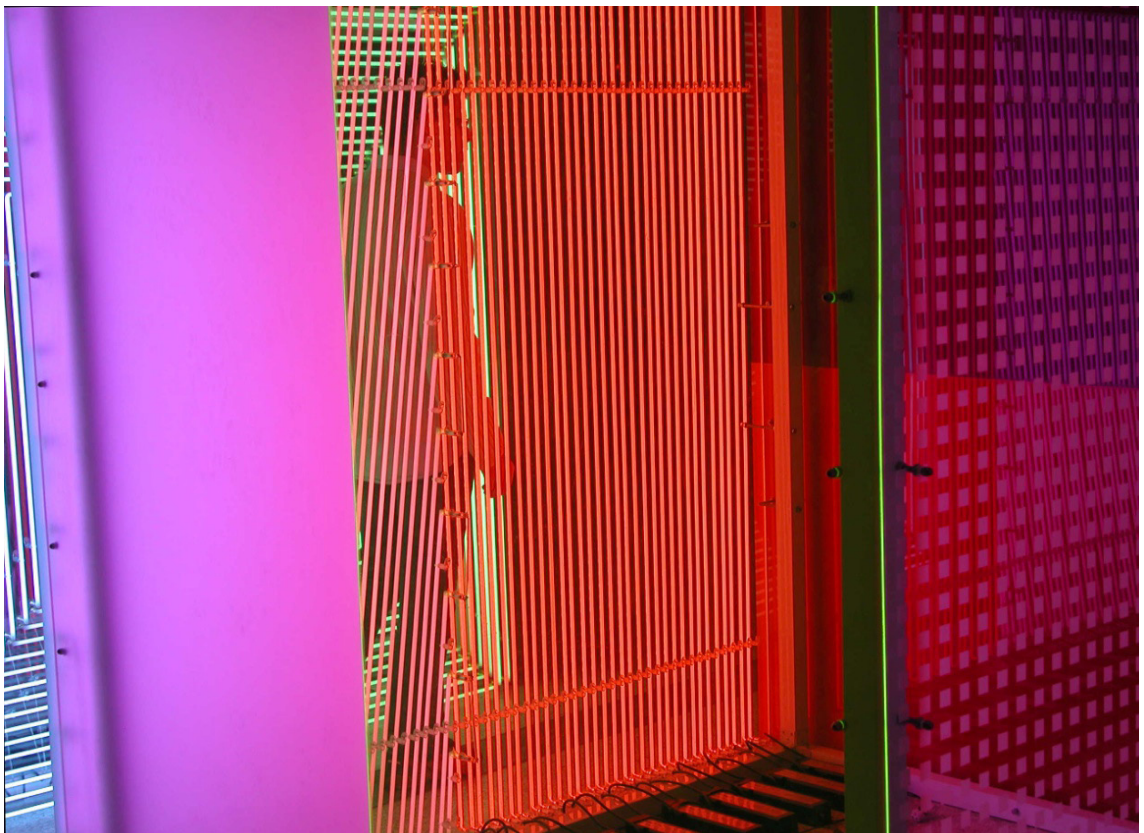


Fig. 46

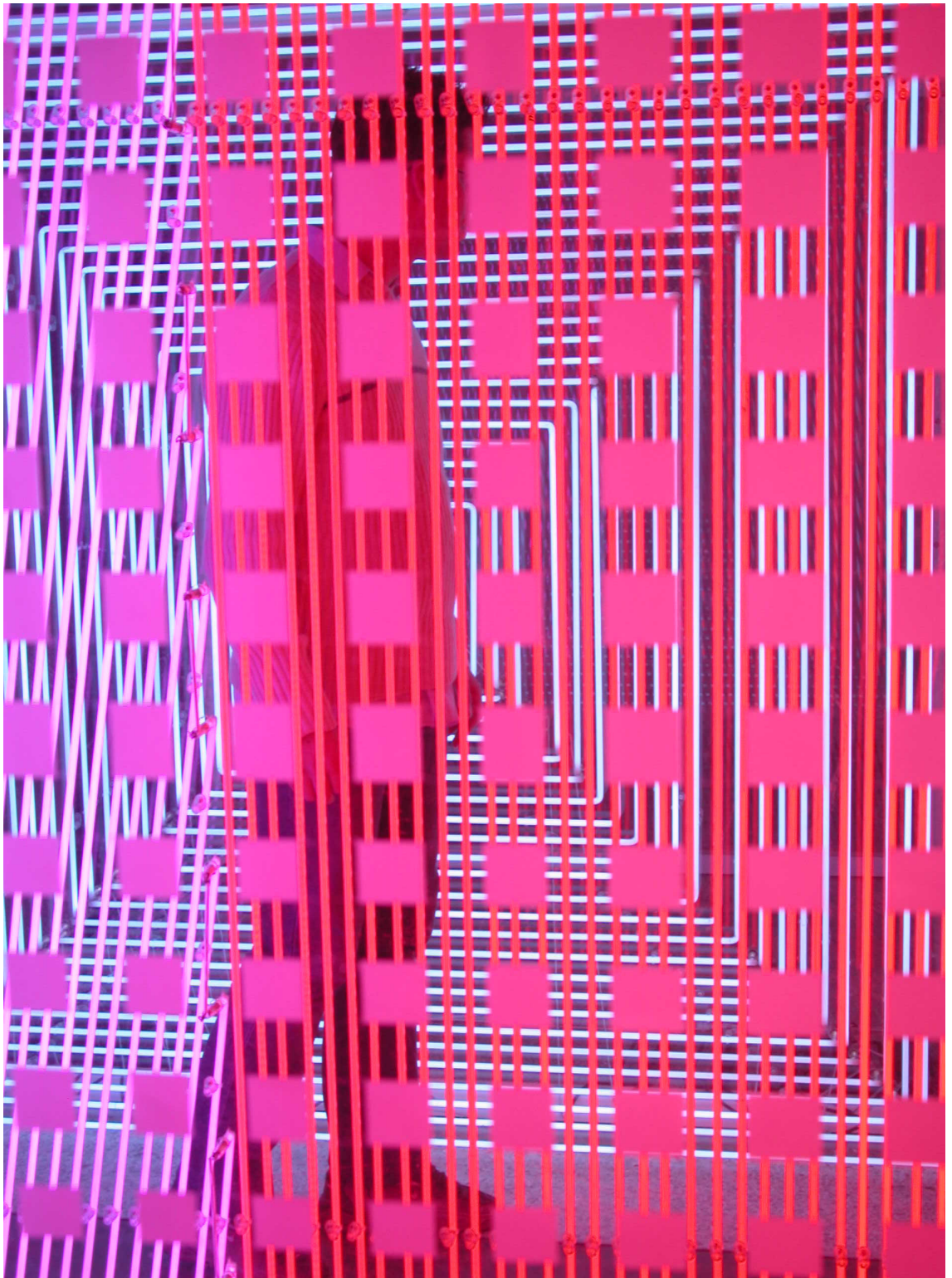


Fig 47

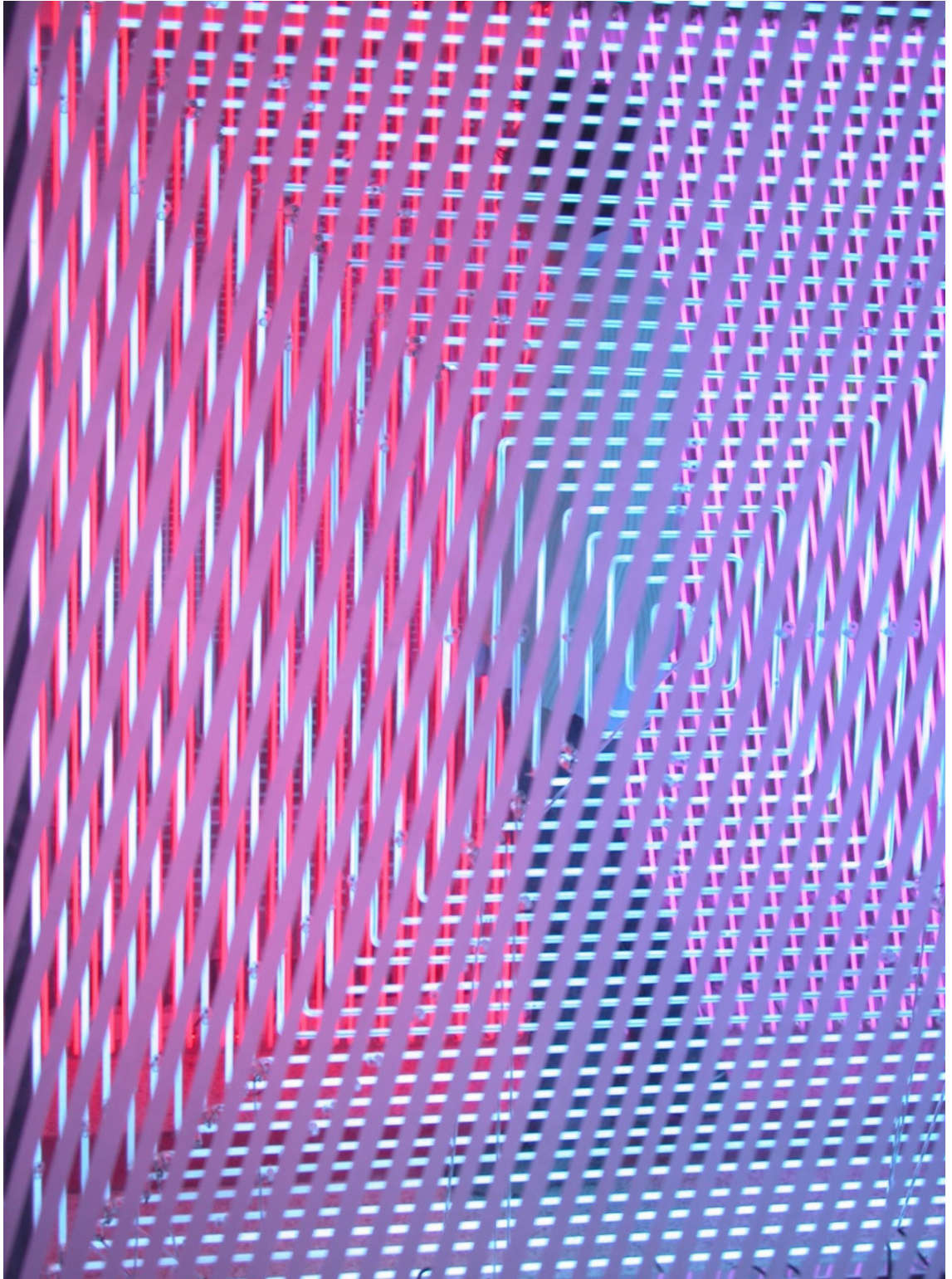


Fig 48

## ***In Site Compression, 2007***

### **Movement, alone and together**

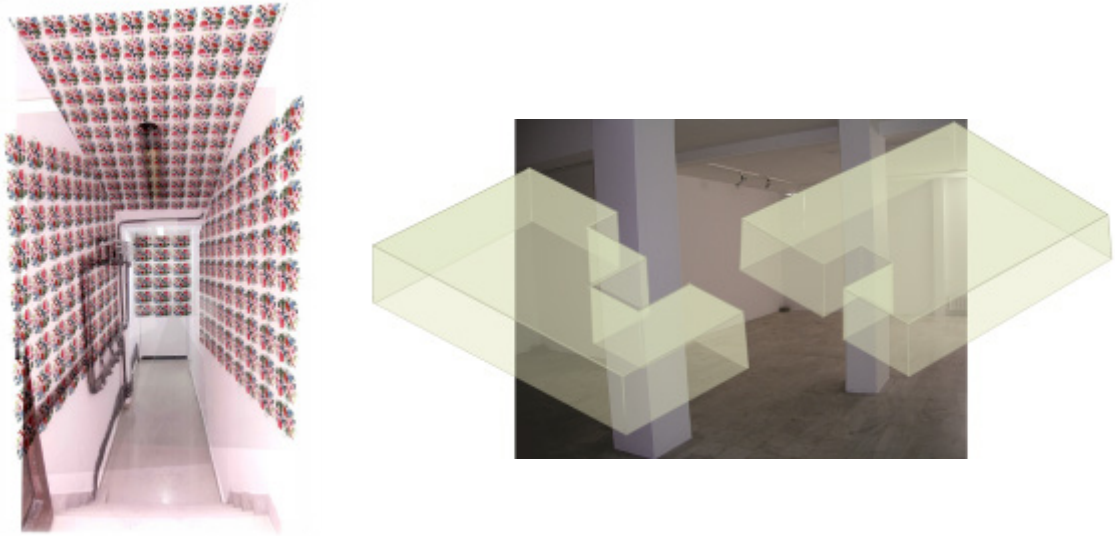


Fig. 49. Vasiliki Christouli, digital studies for the installation *In Site Compression*, 2007, corridor and main room. Unless otherwise indicated, all the images in this chapter depict the installation 'In Site Compression' 2007, corridor part of the installation, PP Sheets (50 x70 cm each), adhesive tape, dimensions variable main room installation, metal frames, voile (trevira), 4,9 x 7 m x 60cm overall. Gallery 7, Athens

In late 2006, I was invited by M. Kanakaki, the owner of Gallery 7, to create an installation in her space. Gallery 7 is located in the centre of Athens, opposite the Greek parliament, and its entrance is on a small street (Zalokosta Street) reserved for pedestrians. The neighbourhood is very busy during the day when shops and offices are full of people, but it becomes quite quiet at night.

My approach was to investigate the site in detail before conceiving the installation. This led me to explore unknown or hidden areas of the gallery's architecture and its surroundings, in a similar way that Robert Smithson explored unknown areas.

The investigation of a specific site is a matter of extracting concepts out of existing sense-data through direct perceptions. Perception is prior to conception, when it comes to site selection or definition. One does not *impose*, but rather *exposes* the site...the unknown areas of sites... (Smithson, cited in Carreri 2002: 161)

The next stage of my procedure was to design an installation that would reveal the concepts that I selected from my perception of the space of Gallery 7.

The gallery space was divided into two parts: a long narrow corridor and a main room. In order to enter the corridor, one had to descend four steps from street level, while the corridor itself was lined by rows of water-pipes that ran the entire length of the corridor's left wall. The main room was composed of two rectangular spaces, unevenly divided by two large rectangular columns, which broke up any continuity that the space might have had as a unified volume, while the low ceiling reinforced the feeling that the two columns supported the heavy mass of the building above them. The floor was covered with white marble, and the wall surfaces and ceiling were painted matt white. The gallery was lit by pale daylight from a narrow window onto Zalokosta Street in the main room, and by artificial light from a transparent glass door that separated the corridor from the main room.



Fig. 50. Vasiliki Christouli, photographic views of Gallery 7, corridor and main gallery

I decided to create an installation that would take advantage of the particular architectural characteristics of both the corridor and the main room, and that would reflect and oppose their sense of enclosure. This impression of the gallery's 'squeezed' empty space was also strongly connected with the sense of the gallery propping up the huge building above it, and was strengthened by the

narrow descending corridor – a ‘restricted’ space that one had to traverse in order to reach the main gallery room and which reflected the contrast between the gallery and the vast cityscape around it. My installation therefore articulated two opposing parts, one installed in the corridor and the other in the main room. It also clearly belonged to the category ‘architecture plus not-architecture’ as defined by Rosalind Krauss (Krauss 1985: 283), since it explored the possibility of mapping the axiomatic features of the architectural experience, the abstract conditions of openness and closure onto the reality of this specific gallery’s space.

The first part of *In Site Compression* situated in the corridor was made of transparent Polypropylene (PP) sheets (50 x 70 cm each) printed in a coloured flower pattern, which covered the walls and ceiling in a disorderly manner. Both the back and front of the PP sheets were stuck randomly to the surfaces with transparent tape, which allowed the ‘still life’ motif to be seen from both sides. The various iconographic palimpsests unfolded on the corridor’s surfaces, bearing the role of a ‘wallpaper’, created the effect of a peculiar, compressed landscape. The second part of the installation in the main gallery consisted of two light, three-dimensional geometric volumes composed of translucent tissue (voile) hung slightly above eye level on a metal frame. These were designed to surround and incorporate the two columns of the room so as to reflect its architectural structure. The claustrophobic atmosphere of the corridor resulting from the excess of information offered to the viewer contrasted with the simple and reduced character of the structures in the main room.

The two parts of *In Site Compression* therefore produced an encounter between different environments as determined by their aesthetics, and were designed to challenge viewers’ normal perceptions by proposing that reality could be understood as a set of unstable and evolving relations. The juxtaposition created by the two parts also explored antithetical notions of representation and experience, actual and virtual, object and viewer, permanent and temporary, and the unexpected affinities that might lie between them.

## The corridor



Fig. 51



Fig. 52

## Space in between

The corridor part of the installation was designed to emphasise the architectural features of the space, pointing to its contradictory conditions of openness and closure.

A corridor has little status or life of its own. Rooms are personalised, made an individual's territory, or marked for specific use, but a corridor is a place of transit, like a horizontal staircase. The corridor that connected Gallery 7 to the city, making the passage possible or closing what may be opened, constituted both a frontier and a bridge between different areas. Michel de Certeau, describing the paradox of the frontier, has written in *The Practice of Everyday Life*: 'Created by contacts, the points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable in them. Of two bodies in contact, which possesses the frontier that distinguishes them? Neither' (De Certeau 1984: 127). The role of the frontier is a mediating one, a middle place, a space in between. The corridor of *In Site Compression*, as a space in between, could be a lingering place for viewers, but was also a border, 'a site of anxiety', as Judith Rugg has characterised it (Rugg 2010: 157), where antithetical notions of openness and closure, private and public, familiar and strange, were evoked by the juxtaposition of the urban environment and the gallery space. By making 'visible the normally unseen' (Rugg 2010: 160), the corridor part of the installation gave emphasis to the empty corridor space in which it was created.

In contrast to the emptiness of the gallery white cube, the urban landscape offers a profusion and complexity of signs and spaces – an excess of information. Hence the urban environment that viewers experienced before entering the gallery opposed the feeling of silence in the gallery itself, which was nevertheless transformed by the work and their presence. *In Site Compression* therefore pointed to the difference between the urban landscape that surrounded it and the reality of where it was installed (inside the gallery in the busy city), and to the qualities of 'immanent' space evoked by the city, inviting viewers to experience the corridor as a new and unfamiliar interior 'landscape'.

Entering the corridor, the visitor was immediately enclosed in its long narrow shell and by a discreet and intimate space. But despite this first impression, after a few steps viewers felt visually bombarded by its decorative surfaces. The repetition of the motifs, the distortions caused by the overlapping layers of printed PP sheets – their strenuous colours and heavy, baroque aesthetic – created a suffocating environment. Irrespective of the sheets' motifs – I initially used them to translate the excess of the city into a different kind of excess in the corridor – when the installation was finished I realised that they communicated their own dynamic. The sheets were leftovers from a family industry in the 1970s and were used to decorate plastic vessels, but were now being used for a completely different purpose. However, this change of use didn't prevent their familiar flowery patterns from evoking domestic memories. Moreover, their transparency permitted the different layers, and even the adhesive tape that held them together, to be seen, alerting viewers to the fact that human labour had been involved in installing this 'handmade wallpaper' and adding a further emotional charge to the iconographic aesthetics of the corridor.

This emotional charge represented, for me, an attempt to manage viewers' memory of the chaos of the city before entering the installation space. Thus, instead of just a neutral introductory space, the corridor became a link between the urban environment and the main installation, providing communication as well as separation. This link was formed by the points where the movements of viewers (entering, advancing, returning, exiting) met the narrative composed both by the 'displacement' in the use of the PP sheets and their iconographical elements, turning the frontier into a crossing. In this way, the corridor transformed the void of the middle place, the frontier, into a sort of bridge that offered a plenitude of 'exchanges and encounters' (Certeau 1984: 127), which welded together the abundance of the city with the aura of the installation in the main gallery.

The compressed 'landscape' of the corridor dominated by the flowery sheets was not, however, reducible to this single feature. In order to appreciate the whole (the interior of the corridor), viewers had to ignore particulars, as they

do when looking at a landscape.<sup>33</sup> As W. Mitchell (Mitchell, 2003: 170) has written: 'Landscape...is generally the "overlooked" not the "looked at".' Situated on a spatial boundary, the corridor with its vivid printed sheets turned what is normally a transitional space into the centre of the viewer's perception, thus creating another contradiction between its function as an in-between space and that of an autonomous site-specific installation. In its attempt to represent the no-man's-land between outside and inside (Greeves 2002: 34, 53), openness and closure, public and private, intimate and strange, the corridor of *In Site Compression* 'occupied a borderline site of intensity and a conflict of space' (Rugg 2010:161).



Fig. 53. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, corridor, detail of pasted PP Sheets

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<sup>33</sup> An analogy might be to compare media images (from news, advertising, film and so on) with satellite photographs. By shrinking the Earth, satellite images present a picture of relative homogeneity of the world rather than diversity, allowing people to realise that 'we inhabit a single planet, infinitely small in an infinitely large universe' (Augé, 2008: x, 26).

## The location of an event

The route of *In Site Compression* was redefined by the corridor, while in the main gallery it lay around the outside of the installation's components. Examples of earlier works of art concerned with the notion of the route or path are Carl André's *Sixteen Steel Cardinal* (1974) and Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967). In the first case, the route consisted of an 'object', a flat sculpture on which one could walk. In the second, it consisted of a 'trace of action', the image of trodden grass, which contained the presence of absence; absence of the body, absence of the object (see Carreri 2002: 148,156). In *In Site Compression* (both the corridor and the main room), however, the route was not the object as in *Sixteen Steel Cardinal*, but the *space left empty* by the installation's components. Similarly, the participation of the viewers pointed to the importance of their bodily incursion, not as a trace of past action as in *A Line Made by Walking*, but *during* their walking in the present.

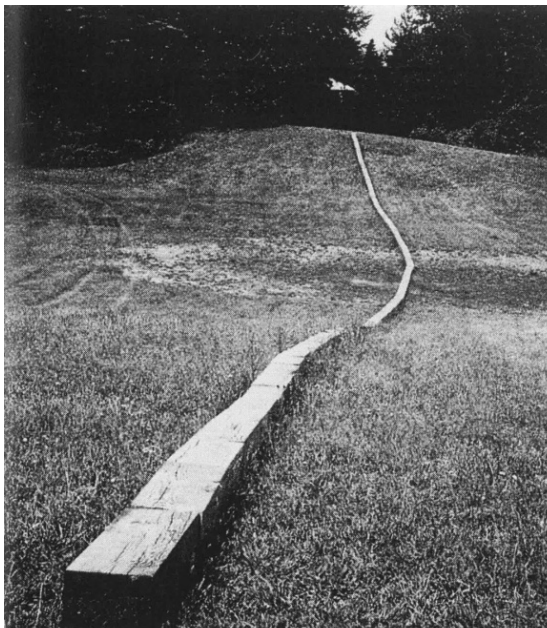


Fig. 54. Carl Andre, *Sixteen Cardinal*, 1974.  
Photograph: Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Fig. 55. Richard Long, *A Line Made by Walking*, 1967. Photograph: Antony D'Offay Gallery, London

The corridor part of the installation led abruptly with its bold presence to the main room's sculptural installation. Positioned at both the beginning and end of *In Site Compression*, the corridor therefore constituted the introduction and conclusion of the viewers' bodily experience. This spatial parameter was closely

intertwined with the notion of time in viewers' perceptions. The most important relation between time, the installation and the viewer was the real time each viewer spent with the work, as could be said of any installation or artwork, including film, poetry and literature. In the case of the corridor, this real time was divided into two parts, one spent during the viewer's arrival and the other during their departure. The *space* of the corridor as an entity, with its abstract and geometric connotations, contrasted with it as a *place*, as the location of an event: the place where something had happened. While moving in the narrow corridor space, viewers experienced its heavy baroque aesthetics – the narrative evoked by its flowery iconographic palimpsests and the characteristic smell of the synthetic sheets – along with its sense of confinement.

Together with their experience of the present, viewers in the corridor were also prompted to experience the past through the printed sheets, which were not neutral. Even viewers who had not experienced the sheets in their initial use realised that they referred to a time gone by, while awareness of the change in the material's relationship with time was also complemented by understanding of the time spent in applying the sheets to the walls and ceiling. The sheets' successive layers stressed their different textures and provoked visual oscillations that revealed indirectly to the observer the various stages of the production process, which was close to handicraft, and suggested that the time and energy spent in constructing the 'wallpaper' had been captured and packed between its layers.

All this energy seemed to have been released and time stopped when the installation was demolished and the material thrown away. Its demolition was a gesture that opposed the notion of permanence associated with art's 'timeless' value with the time spent, and added to the ephemeral aspect of the work. Meanwhile, the photographic and video reproduction of the act of destruction had a double function: first, as proof of the installation's temporariness and site-specificity; second, it permitted the work to be revisited and offered continuity in time.<sup>34</sup> Any future installation based on these

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<sup>34</sup> This continuity converts the work into an instant ruin. See Chapter 1, 'Seven Windows Divided by Two'.

reproductions should therefore be regarded as another artistic response, which will exert its own dynamic on time, space and viewer. As an example for this procedure, I would like to refer to my intention to project the filmic documentation of the destruction of the corridor part of the installation onto an architectural space for my viva. In this future site-specific installation apart from the site displacement, 'a displaced action belonging to *two* pasts' will be overlaid onto the given architectural space: that of the destruction of the corridor part of the installation, and the subjective associations deriving from the installation's unique material (the PP sheets).<sup>35</sup> A subversion of the site- and time-specificity of the corridor part of the installation will thus take place at this juncture between real and filmic space, and time poised between past and present.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The expression is borrowed from Ken Wilder. In his article *Filmic Bodies: Transgressing Boundaries between Filmic and Real Space* (2014), referring to his sculptural installation *Cutting In* (2013), he wrote: 'The installation (thus) interweaves structural and subjective associations, where a displaced action belonging to *two* pasts is overlaid onto the work's structural mechanism: that of a staged painting and the replicated gestures of a deceased father'. *Cutting In* (2013) consisted of 'two prerecorded digital films...projected onto rear-projection screens attached to either end of the construction [a gridded steel structure], the projectors mounted within the frame itself. The films and soundtrack document, in real time, my painting of two red circles onto the walls of the gallery... The performance is [thus] a kind of personal reenactment, in that I wear the same type of overalls as my father once wore, enacting what for me are poignant memories of my father at work' (Wilder 2014: 374).

<sup>36</sup> This installation named *After 'In Site Compression 2007'* (2017), was realised on March 2017, on the occasion of the viva exhibition of this research at 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London. See Figs 105–116.

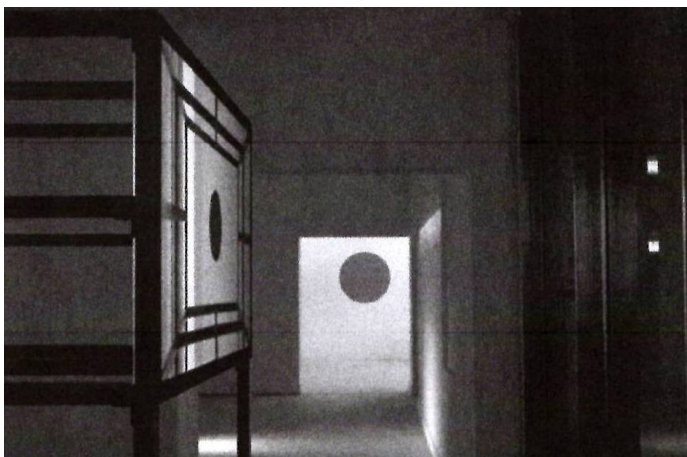
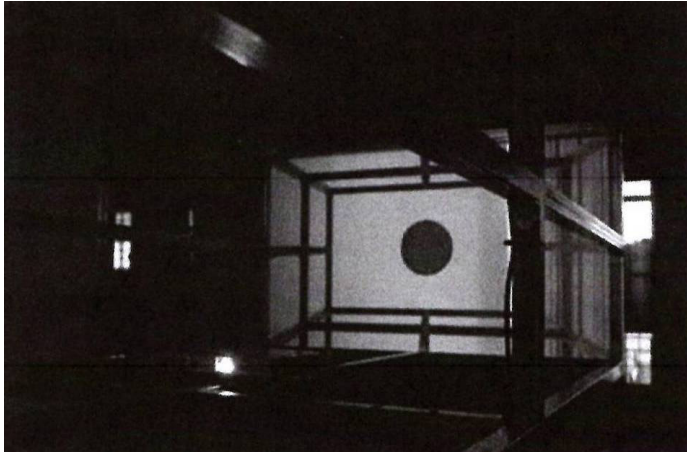


Fig. 56. Ken Wilder, *Cutting In*, 2013, two digital film projections onto rear-projection screens, steel structure 197 x 123 x 247 cm. Installation view, Chelsea College of Arts, London. Copyright: Ken Wilder



Fig. 57. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, video still, destruction of the corridor part of the installation



Fig. 58. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, video still, destruction of the corridor part of the installation



Fig. 59. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, video still, destruction of the corridor part of the installation



Fig. 60. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, video still, disposal of the corridor part of the installation

## Main installation room



Fig. 61. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, installation view of the main room installation, metal frames, voile (trevira), 4,9 x 7 m x 60cm overall. Gallery 7, Athens

## Negative space, the void and the full

The second and larger part of *In Site Compression* was 'drawn' between the floor and the ceiling of the main gallery room and consisted of two semi-transparent geometric volumes, in opposition to the plethoric 'cheap', flowery corridor that connected them to the city. These two forms gave shape to what was the indeterminate and abstract nature of the empty gallery space, and transformed it into some kind of stabilised void. In the opposite way of Gordon Matta-Clark's inflatable works, which, by drawing 'an extended form through the air', air as solid form shifted into air as 'vertiginous void', as Thomas Crow has written (Crow 2003: 25), the two volumes of *In Site Compression* locked out part of the gallery's empty space, by transmuting it into solid forms.



Fig. 62

*In Site Compression* therefore created an environment that altered the importance of the gallery's space. The axes of its two void structures aligned with those of the walls, ceiling and floor. When attempting to define the importance of the empty space of a room and its effect on anything placed inside it, Robert Morris stated: 'The space of the room itself is a structuring factor both in its cubic shape and in terms of the kind of compression different sized and proportioned rooms can effect upon the object-subject terms' (cited in Doherty 2009: 26). And with reference to the relationship of a sculptural object with the space in which it is exhibited, he added: 'The holistic object is a positive form within the negative, but equally holistic space of the room' (Morris, cited in Doherty 2009: 27). Hence the two volumes of *In Site Compression* installed in the main gallery constituted not only a positive form within the negative space of the room, but also a negative space in themselves, as their shape was designed to correspond exactly with and echo that of the gallery. The sense of an absence, or missing presence, 'filling' the space of the empty gallery is analogous to the feeling of absence

inside a hollow shell, or a clearing in the forest, and was altered by the presence of the installation, which, by inverting part of the gallery's abstract emptiness into concrete forms, comprised a solid shape of the void. This sense of the gallery space and the two geometric structures being both empty and full at the same time ('filled' with empty space) united the installation with the room.

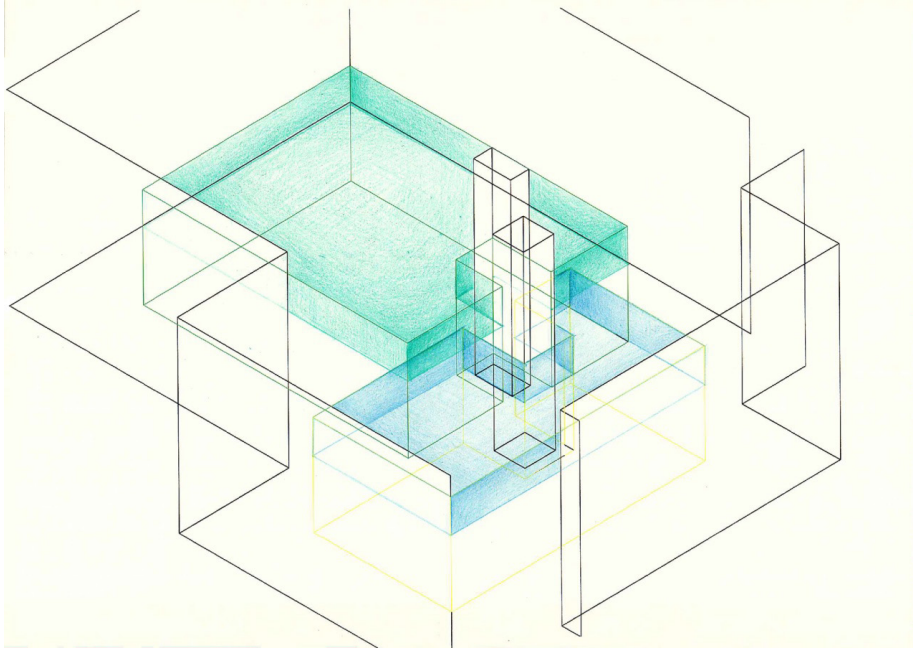


Fig. 63. Vasiliki Christouli, *In Site Compression*, 2007, drawing of main room, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 35 x 40 cm

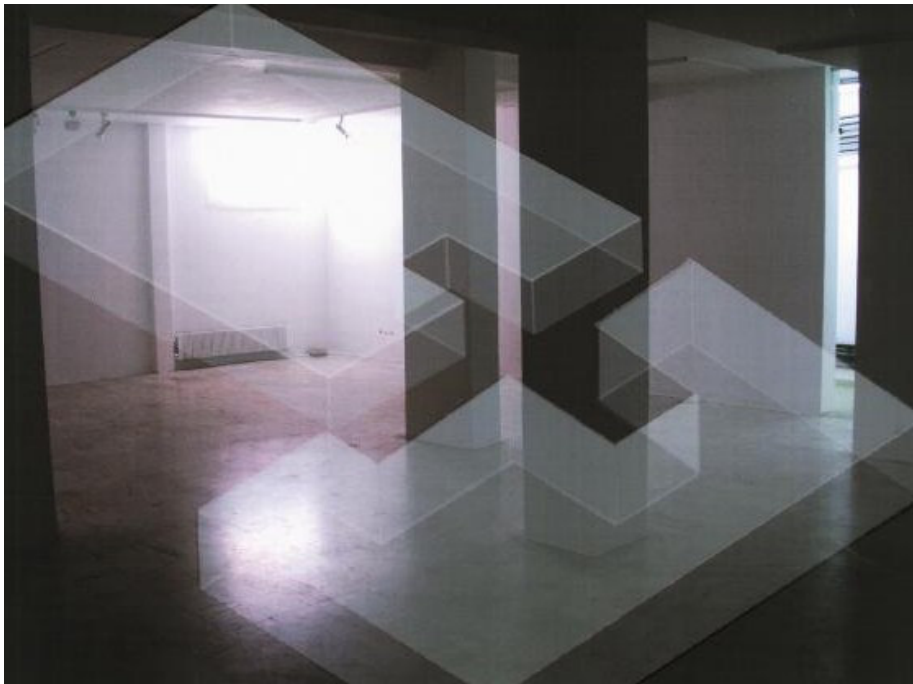


Fig.64. Vasiliki Christouli, *The Void and the Full*, 2007, digital print on photographic paper, 25 x 30 cm



Fig.65

The installation underlined the space between the gallery's ceiling and floor and sliced it into three uneven parts, the middle and narrowest of which was occupied by its two volumes. The notion of dividing spaces (architectural or not) into slices is also seen in the 'cuts' of Gordon Matta-Clark and Dennis Oppenheim's works. Explaining his work to an interviewer in 1977, Matta-Clark remarked:

A simple cut or series of cuts acts as a powerful drawing device able to redefine spatial situations and structural components. There is a kind of complexity that comes from taking an otherwise completely normal, conventional, albeit anonymous situation and redefining it. (Gordon Matta-Clark, cited in Thomas Crow 2003: 19)

In Matta-Clark's *Splitting The Humphrey Street Building, Eaglewood, New Jersey* (1974), the 'cut' produced an absolute gap, a slice of empty space that changed the organised architectural system of the house (Crow 2003: 162).

In a similar way, in Dennis Oppenheim's *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*, (Ithaca, New York 1969), the cut revealed the liquid water of the river in a linear form which waded across the solid ice, revealing its restless and changeable substance.

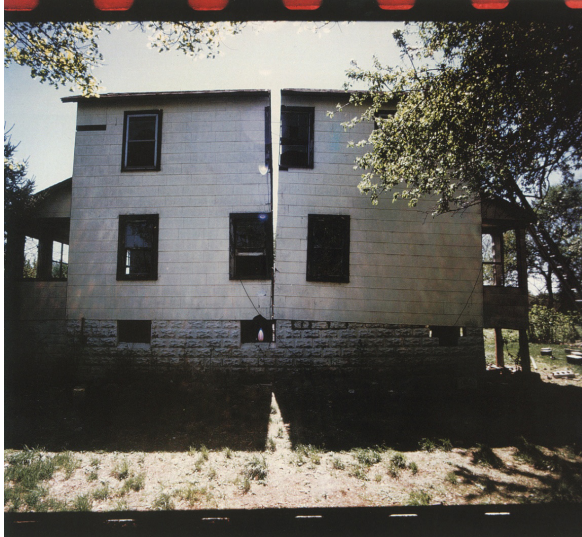


Fig. 66. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting the Humphrey Street Building*, 1974, Eaglewood, NJ, silver dye bleach print (Cibachrome), 76.2 x 101.6 cm. Collection: Gail and Tony Ganz

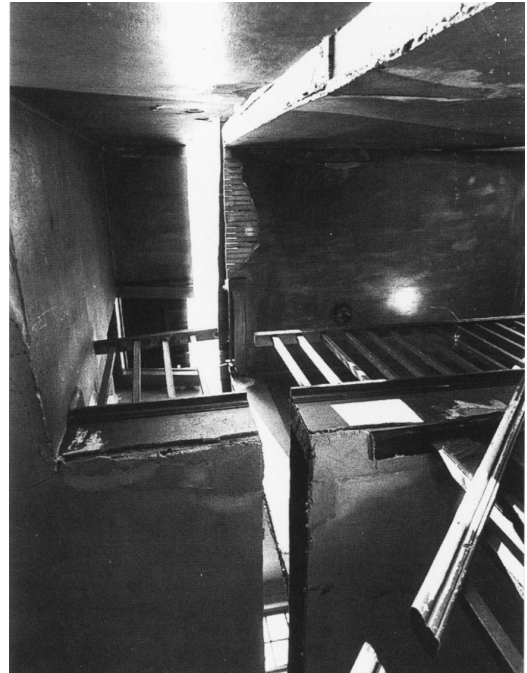


Fig. 67. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting the Humphrey Street Building*, 1974, Eaglewood, NJ, gelatin silver print. Collection: Frederieke Sanders Taylor



Fig. 68. Dennis Oppenheim, *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*, 1969, for the exhibition 'Earth Art', Cornell's Art Gallery, Ithaca, New York

In the case of *In Site Compression*, the two horizontal volumes sliced the gallery into three horizontal parts, performing a metaphorical 'cut' that appeared to materialise part of its empty space. This was the opposite of Matta-Clark's *Splitting* and Oppenheim's *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*, where the cut in the house or ice, constituting a material subtraction, produced an immaterial gap, a space.

But though *In Site Compression* had reversed Matta-Clark and Oppenheim's gesture of emptying, in a gesture of 'filling', there was an analogous attempt to redefine spatial situations and structural components. The act of turning a negative shape, a void, into a solid form, can be seen in Bruce Nauman's *A Cast of the Space under My Chair* (1965–8). For Nauman, negative space involved 'thinking about the underside and backside of things' (Kraynak 2005: 324). Similarly, Rachel Whiteread has often inverted architectural environments, as in *Untitled (Domestic)* where she turned the negative shape of a staircase into a solid form, employing a 'negative cast to harden inaccessible spaces inside, underneath and between objects and spaces into mass', as Melanie Mariño has written (Townsend 2004: 90). But whereas Rachel Whiteread created 'objects of solidified space' (Greeves in Schneider, Johnson, and Whiteread 2002: 37), the two volumes of *In Site Compression*, comprising hollow forms residing in the gallery's hollow construction, created a layering of the empty spaces inside and outside them.



Fig. 69. Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Domestic)*, 2002, mixed media, 676 x 584 x 245 cm. Installation view, Haunch of Venison, London. Works of art copyright: 2002 Rachel Whiteread

The space of the main room was not only measured by the voids inside the two structural volumes but also by the space reserved for viewers to move around

them. Carl André had said that he wanted 'to have the space above the sculpture understood as a component of his sculpture' (Schneider in Schneider, Johnson, and Whiteread 2002: 34). In the main room of *In Site Compression*, even though the space that surrounded the object was not part of the theme of the work (as Christiane Schneider has also observed in Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled (One Hundred Spaces)*), it was important for two reasons. Firstly, the two volumes helped shape the architectural space that surrounded the viewer. Secondly, the spatial relationship that developed between viewer and object impelled scrutiny of the room's solid physical structure in comparison with the weightless character of the installation, inviting comparison of the architectural conditions of sculpture with the sculptural conditions of architecture (see Melanie Mariño, cited in Townsend and Cross 2004: 97). As Robert Morris has written:

In perceiving an object, one occupies a separate space – one's own space. In perceiving architectural space, one's own space is not separate but coexistent with what is perceived. In the first case, one surrounds; in the second one is surrounded. This has been an enduring polarity between sculptural and architectural experience. (Morris, cited in Doherty 2009: 27)

In the case of *In Site Compression*, as a result of its shape and relation to the gallery as architectural container, and of the viewer's bodily incursion into the space of the installation, sculptural and architectural experience became fused.

As the most important antithetical notions embodied by the installation, the void and the form were also closely intertwined with those of absence and presence. For the architect Peter Eisenman, 'site is a function of absence'. Observing that 'absence is either the trace of a previous presence, it contains *memory*; or the trace of a possible presence, it contains immanence', Eisenman reads site as 'complex and multiple, always subject to absence's processes of disappearance and appearance' (cited in Kaye 2000 (1986): 96).

By emphasising the empty space of the gallery, *In Site Compression* was designed to point to this antithesis of absence and presence: the emptiness of the gallery underlined the notion of the absence but was simultaneously transformed by the structure's presence and articulation of space, as well as by

the occasional appearance and disappearance of the viewers negotiating their way around it. This interrupted view of the viewers was the result of the semi-transparent texture of the structure's two volumes. My intention in producing 'something' from the void was to give form to the abstract substance of the gallery's empty space, which I did by re-sketching and compressing the room's interior into a three-dimensional form. This strategy recalls the work of two other artists: Gordon Matta-Clark's *A W-Hole House* (1973), of which he said that he wanted to 'somehow [get] the building to talk'; and Rachel Whiteread's architectonic piece *Ghost* (1990), a cast of the parlour of a Victorian terraced house, of which she said her intention was to 'mummify the silence in a room' (Gail and Alberge, cited in Whiteread 2002: 38).



Fig. 70

The aim of *In Site Compression* was to construct an installation as much about the abstract space as the specific boundaries of the room, which was achieved by reflecting and preserving the character of the space in the two volumes – a shell within the shell. Attempting to analyse the function of Rachel

Whiteread's *Untitled (Domestic)* (2002) when distanced from its original space, Susanna Greeves wrote that the work took on 'the quality of an archetype; clean, formal and intellectualised' (Greeves 2002: 53). *In Site Compression*, however, constituted a 'representation' of the gallery space only while situated within it. As soon as the exhibition ended, the two volumes were dismantled and 'what was contained' was removed from its 'container'. If the work were to be exhibited somewhere else, its meaning would change. The fact that the shape of *In Site Compression*'s two volumes would continue to reflect the reasoning for their creation would turn it effectively into a 'non-place', a space characterised with the quality of a place as an absence of the place from itself, or a 'space promoted to the status of place of memory', to use Marc Augé's terms (Augé 1995: 78–80, 85–6).



Fig. 71

## The real and the virtual



Fig. 72

The installation *In Site Compression* dealt with the coexistence of contradictory elements for the creation of an ‘imaginary’ space – that of the compressed empty gallery. This ‘imaginary’ space for the viewer was also ‘real’. It was like colour in abstract painting, which resembles nothing but obeys the energies and facticity of its origins. This relation of the individual to the notion of the real is very important for me as a way of describing the dynamics of *In Site Compression*. The real, from the beginning of its perception, as Merleau-Ponty suggested, is already there ‘placed in the world’, and is ‘constantly filled with a play of colours, noises and fleeting tactile sensations’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xi). *In Site Compression* was meant to raise questions about the distance between ‘ideal’ space, which has to do with mental categories, and ‘real’ space (the space of material practice),<sup>37</sup> as a result of the viewer’s tactile involvement in

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<sup>37</sup> See Lefebvre (1991: 14) for the distinction between ideal and real space: ‘In actuality each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other.’

the situation proposed by it. As Merleau-Ponty has written: 'The world is what we perceive...not what we think, but what we live through' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xviii). Moreover, *In Site Compression* was designed so that perception would take place spontaneously, or be experienced as the apprehension of 'an immanent sense in the sensible before judgment begins' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 40). This apprehension is separate and distinct from the function of judgement, which is the intellectual process of joining up sensations and completing missing parts, as described by intellectualism.<sup>38</sup> However, awareness that each aspect of the installation (translucent material, shape of components, size, colour) might signify something else – the 'imaginary' space of the compressed gallery empty space (as declared in the title of the installation) – required some kind of cognitive function on the part of viewers. To describe this cognitive procedure, Merleau-Ponty used the example of a red patch on a background:

That a quality, an area of red should signify something, that it should be, for example, seen as a patch on a background, means that the red is not this warm colour which I feel and live in and lose myself in, but it announces something else which it does not include, that it exercises a cognitive function, and that its parts together make up a whole to which each is related without leaving its place. Henceforth the red is no longer merely there, it represents something for me, and what it represents is not possessed as a 'real part' of my perception, but only aimed as an 'intentional part'.<sup>39</sup> My gaze does not merge with the outline or the patch as it does with the redness considered concretely: it ranges over and dominates them. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 16)

In a corresponding way, *In Site Compression* aimed to initiate a sensory experience as much as a cognitive function, to enable the viewer to perceive the

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<sup>38</sup> According to Merleau-Ponty, perception offers 'a meaning inherent in the signs', and judgement, which consists of the '...logical activity of drawing a conclusion', is perception's optional expression (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 40, 53). Merleau-Ponty, in his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, cites Descartes's words on judgement in *2nd Meditation* to argue that it differs from perception: 'I do not fail to say that I see wax; yet what do I see from the window, except hats and coats which may cover ghosts or dummies worked by springs? Yet I judge them to be real men...' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 38).

<sup>39</sup> This expression is Husserl's, cited in Merleau-Ponty (2002: 16).

'intentional part' of the 'imaginary, compressed' gallery space, though this would nevertheless be dominated by perception of the 'real part' of the installation, its literal characteristics.

The space inside the hollow structure of the two volumes of *In Site Compression*, seen as a physically real form, attested to some kind of indeterminate and non-static 'site', though, for me, this did not exist as a permanent, knowable whole. The space of the installation was not just the one it inhabited as a physical object and construction; its spatiality was like a tunnel leading somewhere else, a space associated with the viewer's memory of other spaces in empty buildings all over the city.<sup>40</sup>

This 'visualisation' process presupposes the notion of 'an imaginative engagement overlaid onto everyday reality', which 'plays a supplementary role to perception' (Wilder 2008: 269). According to Wilder, in certain paintings that are integrated into their architectural settings, such as Masaccio's *Trinity*, 'imagination plays a decisive role in negotiating the spatial (and psychological) access to a work' (Wilder 2008: 269). Wilder argues that a fusion of the internal and external onlooker occurs in such works, defining the former as the spectator who already occupies an unrepresented extension of the 'virtual' space', and the latter as 'the beholder [who] enters that part of the fictive world depicted as being *in front of* the picture surface, the work thus drawing the "real" space of the spectator into its domain' (Wilder 2008: 261). My position parallels Wilder's in respect of a work's ability to draw a space, which, despite the fact that it is drawn 'outside' the work, is incorporated into its domain as a result of the viewer's imaginative engagement. But while Wilder talks about the extension of the painting's virtual representational space to the real space occupied by the spectator, in my view, the spatiality of *In Site Compression* in which the viewer is immersed extends to an imaginative space that unites all the analogous spaces in empty buildings in the city into an imaginary whole. Hence, instead of the 'continuity' of the *virtual* space with the

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<sup>40</sup> See Merleau-Ponty (2002: 20) for the association of impressions: an impression has the power to arouse others, 'provided that it is already *understood* in the light of the past experience in which it coexisted with those that we are concerned to arouse'.

*real*, I argue for the possibility of a ‘continuity’ between the perceived *real* space and an *imagined* one.

The immersion of the beholder in the installation’s space automatically converts the notion of an external beholder to that of an internal one,<sup>41</sup> eliminating any need for distinction between these two concepts. This is because *In Site Compression*, as a sculptural object by definition and due to the articulation of its components, impels the viewers to perambulate it. As a result, the imaginative experience of the beholder is overlaid onto the phenomenological experience of the installation’s real spatiality.

Today, the function of private and public spaces in the centre of Athens is inverted: central squares and roads shelter homeless people and refugees, while a lot of buildings remain unoccupied and abandoned; the inner and outer spaces of Athens therefore transcend each other’s boundaries. In this destabilised society, where displacement and exile are as important as place and rootedness, and homelessness is as important as home, one of my ambitions for *In Site Compression* was to potentially raise consciousness of these conditions.

There may be similarities between my ambition to extend the spatial experience of *In Site Compression* to imaginary spaces of the city and the aims of Matta-Clark, who told an interviewer in 1977 that he wished to ‘extend the building...below as much as above, like an alchemical motif where there is that definite dichotomy – or balance – between the above and the below’ (Matta-Clark, quoted in Crow 2003: 20). In their fictional continuation, the two structures in the gallery could be connected with analogous spaces in every empty or abandoned building in the city, thus becoming part of some kind of structured landscape – a labyrinthine, horizontal construction composed by ‘floating islands’ of empty spaces extending all over the city and creating a

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<sup>41</sup> Wilder argues that in works implying an external spectator, ‘the virtual space itself is conceived as an extension of the “real” space in which the spectator stands’. These works have ‘an ‘external coherence’, which means that they ‘are completed only by the presence of a spectator, and establish a rapport with the viewer’, to use Wilder’s words commenting on Alois Riegl’s statements (Wilder 2008: 270).

complicated web. These surreal structured islands recollect the city imagined by Constant Nieuwenhuys in his *New Babylon* (1969), and the ‘city of the future’ of Robert Smithson. In the case of Nieuwenhuys’ imaginary city, ‘cuts’ in the seamless urban fabric were put back together to form a new city, where, as Carreri has written, ‘local areas and empty space have become an inseparable whole’ (Carreri 2002: 117). In the second case, Smithson’s ‘city of the future’ was made of structures and surfaces performing ‘no natural function’, existing ‘between mind and matter, detached from both, representing neither’ (Smithson 1996: 14). Finally, Vito Acconci has spoken about a ‘city in the air’, supported by imaginary scaffolding, built over the site of his public art project: ‘...it’s as if our projects build a scaffolding over the site: it’s this scaffolding that can support another site, either on top or within the old one – a future city, a city in the air’ (Acconci quoted in Doherty 2009: 136).

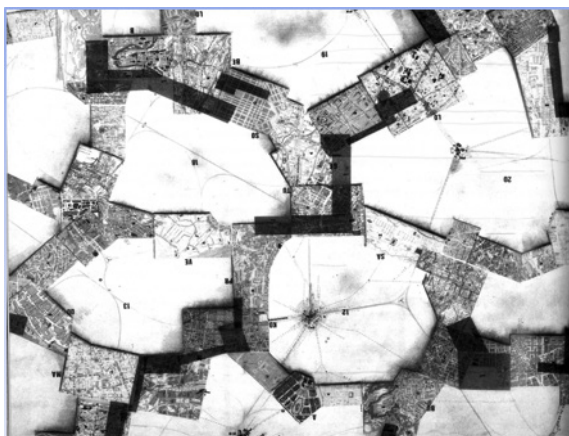


Fig. 73. Constant (Victor Nieuwenhuys), *Symbolishe voorstelling van New Babylon* (Symbolic Representation of New Babylon), collage, 1969, VEGAP.

*In Site Compression* was not an attempt ‘to distinguish between two worlds, the world of reality and the world of experience (with the former pre-existing the latter and the latter acquiring legitimacy in so far as it verifies the ineluctability of the former)’, to borrow Patricia Falguieres’ words (Falguieres quoted in Doherty 2009: 183). For me, the importance of the viewer’s experience of *In Site Compression* was in the coexistence of its literal appearance and the intellectual process that the tactile relationship to it might arouse. In this respect, the notion of the collective, in the sense of the interaction of viewers with each

other as evoked by the situation articulated by the installation, played a very important role. The collective's only requirement is the shared contemporaneity of all participating subjects and objects. As William James has said in *A Pluralistic Universe* (2005), 'What really exists is not things made but things in the making' (cited in Doherty 2009: 183). The importance of *In Site Compression* lay in the fact that it might enable viewers to go from an 'initial real "this" to an imaginary "here", "there", "now", "I", "we"' (Falguieres, cited in Doherty 2009: 183).

### **Transitional spaces**

*In Site Compression* therefore aimed to address experience through abstraction and to unify space and time into a continuum, since in the experience of the abstract subject space and time are felt as functions of each another.

The term 'space' is more abstract in meaning than that of 'place'. According to Augé, who has made a clear distinction between the two terms, 'space' is applied 'to an area, a distance between two things or points (two meters space) or to a temporal expanse (in the space of a week)' (Augé 1995: 67). The empty space of Gallery 7 constituted not only the site of the construction of the installation but also the matter of it. As Vito Acconci has stated of his projects, *In Site Compression* was '...built *with* the site, *by means* of the site' (Acconci, quoted in Doherty 2009: 136). On the other hand, the formal vocabulary of the architecture used for its construction relates to art-historical discourse about the ambiguities and boundary crossings between art and architecture, which appeared as a central concern of modernism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the relationship of art to real life. Many artists have questioned the claim that what distinguishes architecture from sculpture is functionality, and in response set out to create socially relevant sculpture in order to bring their work into closer contact with reality. This is seen in Brancusi's work where there is a close relationship between architecture and sculpture, notably his monument to the Romanian heroes of the First World War, which was created for the town of Târgu Jiu. Other artists of the late 1960s, like Michael Asher or Dan Graham, and, more recently, Rachel Whiteread, have also used architecture in their work (Schneider 2002: 32).



Fig. 74

*In Site Compression* developed a unique relationship with the architectural space of the gallery for which it was created. By taking possession of it, the installation offered the observer the opportunity to ‘share an experience that goes beyond the visible and that addresses, like architecture, the entire body, its presence in time and space’, as Carreri has written when discussing the relation of Minimalist sculpture to the space and viewer (Carreri 2002: 138). However, the way inner and outer space transcended each other’s boundaries in the two volumes of the installation *In Site Compression* added a further dimension to the use of the specific formal architectural vocabulary. The transparent substance of the two structures allowed the viewer to see inside their forms to the metal armature, and to the games of perspective played by the juxtaposition of its horizontal and vertical lines with those of the architectural space of the gallery. Moreover, the fragile texture of the material (organza) softened the rigidity of their shapes, drawing attention to the interconnection of different phenomena: the space inside and outside the two volumes, the gallery’s architectural characteristics and the people strolling around. However,

this semi-translucent membrane also created a cocoon and imposed a tangible barrier between space and the viewer, who were unable to reach through or step inside the metallic frame. Thus, the membrane marked both the edge of the two volumes – the intersection of presence and absence (Lawson 2004: 74, 215 n. 2) – and their connection with the phenomena around them. As Rinder remarks, the semi-transparent material recalls the Gothic veil:

[...] [a]n image that both marks the threshold between inside and outside while in its insubstantiality signifies the very vulnerability of that demarcation. For Sedgwick, the veil's imprecise bordering alludes to the instability of identity and constant shifting between self and other in the Gothic tradition.<sup>42</sup>

The space between the two volumes, and between them and the gallery's walls, was approximately 'human sized', similar to the narrow entrance into the three chambers created by the four curved steel sheets of Richard Serra's *Intersection Basel* (1992), or the 'gap' in Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled (Wall)* (1999). This 'harks back to Le Corbusier's design system (as in the monastery of La Tourette) based around human dimensions, and places the body inside the split', as Susan Lawson has described Whiteread's *Wall*. Moreover, the human scale of the path formed by the two volumes served to drag the installation's two volumes out of the sphere of the abstract and to position them in the traffic of human body (Lawson 2004: 83).

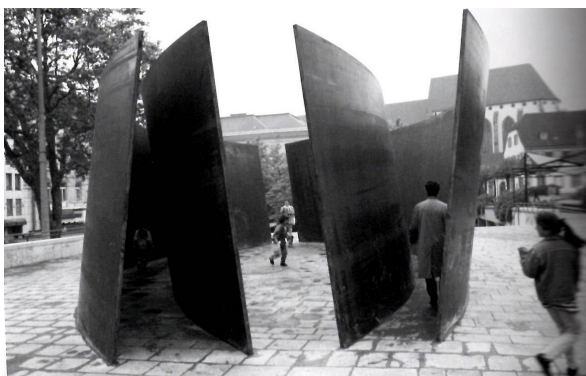


Fig. 75. Richard Serra, *Intersection*, 1992, Basel, installation view in front of the theatre, steel, 4 elements each 3.70 m x 13 m x 5.5 cm. Donated to the canton and City of Basel by 272 citizens for the Offentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, 1994. Photograph: Steffan Nyffeler

<sup>42</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, cited in Rinder (2010 (1997): 185–6).



Fig. 76

*In Site Compression* similarly created paths in the space of the gallery, a kind of labyrinth, despite also underlining the existing architectural plan of the interior. Hence it functioned as a kind of 'landscape', meaning a site, the impression of which appeared to reach beyond the spatial limits of the gallery. The spatiality opened up by *In Site Compression* resembled the experience of the spatiality of the horizon, which is neither spatially nor temporally located in the usual sense, but instead is what delimits the totality of the objects between the viewer and itself. A similar experience of spatiality occurs at night. According to Merleau-Ponty:

Night is not an object for me; it enwraps me and infiltrates through all my senses, shifting my recollections and almost destroying my personal identity. I am no longer withdrawn into my perceptual look-out from which I watch the outlines of objects moving by at distance. Night has no outlines; it is itself in contact with me...it is pure depth without foreground or background, without surfaces and without any distance separating it from me. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 394)

In a similar way, the two volumes of *In Site Compression* delimited the enclosure of the viewers, themselves and the architectural space. By restricting

the space between the viewer and themselves, these structures created a spatiality, which because of the lack of 'things' to be experienced and the blurring effect of the material, turned viewers' perception back on themselves.



Fig. 77

By invading the gallery's space, the installation acted as a presence that stopped the normal operations of time and space with respect to the path formed by it, constructing a 'space of going' rather than a 'space of staying', and functioning as an autonomous system of relations between itself, the actual space and the viewers. Its two transparent boxes suspended in the air formed a single labyrinthine corridor, which continued the architectural corridor connecting the gallery to the city. But while the actual corridor constituted a space between a beginning and end, the path created by the two forms of the installation consisted of a dead-end corridor that led nowhere. What was important was that, by providing the visitors with a 'space of going', it also offered them the opportunity to wander.<sup>43</sup> The installation's construction pointed

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<sup>43</sup> The notion of the wanderer here brings in mind the 'flâneur', the Parisian 'stroller' or dandy

to the journey and not to the destination, or, in other words, the destination was the journey. In a parallel way, in Richard Serra's *Intersection* (1992), placed in front of the Theatre Piazza in Basel, the important experience for the visitor was traversing it. According to Gottfried Boehm: 'A walk through *Intersection* is not something that ushers us along the way to or from the theatre for a few steps. *Intersection*, stands in the way' (Boehm 1996: 61). The importance of the journey versus the destination was also acknowledged by the Greek poet Homer, in his epic poem *The Odyssey*, which focuses on Odysseus' (known as Ulysses in Roman) ten-year journey after the Trojan War, rather than on his arrival at his home island Ithaca.

The 'space of going' created by *In Site Compression*, as a space between departure and arrival, constituted a nomadic space that turned the gallery into a hole in the sedentary space of the city (Carreri 2002: 38, 67 n. 2). Both sedentary and nomadic space are constituents of the concept of the big city. The sedentary space bears the attributes of place, as a configuration of positions that imply stability; nomadic space takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables, and being 'composed of intersections of mobile elements' it is what actually remains from all the movements that take place in the city (De Certeau 1984: 117). The experience of sedentary space leaves a hard, inflexible impression, since it is 'striated by walls, enclosures and routes between the enclosures, while the nomadic space is smooth, marked only by strokes that are erased or shift with the journey' (Carreri 2002: 38).

Like a three-dimensional map, *In Site Compression* seemed to reflect a liquid space in which its two volumes corresponded, metaphorically, to the 'space of staying' due to their solid sculptural forms, which floated like islands in

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spectator of the urban scene who emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was later celebrated in the writings of Charles Baudelaire. The 'flânerie' was succeeded by the 'deambulation' of the Surrealists, and the 'drifting' of the Situationists. The 'flâneur' of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was searching for an experience of the 'sublime' and the picturesque, as stimulants to reverie, while the Surrealists' search was for an experience that contained 'the essence of disorientation and self-abandon to the unconscious' (Carreri 2002: 79). The Situationist 'drifter', on the other hand, was directed to obscure places and routes through the city, in a drift from the ideal and the rational to the extraordinary and revolutionary (see Sadler 1999: 20).

the remaining empty gallery, the 'space of going', filled with moving people. Its plan evoked the maps of Guy Debord for the Situationist City, where 'the figure of reference is clearly the archipelago: a series of city-islands immersed in an empty sea furrowed by wandering' (Debord, cited in Carreri 2002: 104). The space of going in the gallery was like 'a labyrinth through which the mind can pass in an instant thus eliminating the spatial problem' (Smithson 1996: 134). When the labyrinth developed volume and the viewer was called to move in it, only the transparency of the material that allowed its aluminum armature to be seen transformed the work back into a drawing that the mind could experience as a whole.

While walking around the two volumes of *In Site Compression*, viewers had no sense of being connected to any imaginary or real centre or dominant point. And even though they could see both volumes together because of their transparency, when moving around them multiple points of view became discontinuous. The aesthetic experience was therefore comparable to that of the picturesque, as with Richard Serra's sculptures or Piranesi's *Carceri*, which have no centre and whose internal relationships are discontinuous (Boehm 1996: 62).

The notion of the picturesque has influenced urban planning and the artistic production of several artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The original picturesque planners of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whose folly gardens were meant to 'move the viewer to salutary states of awe, melancholy, joy or terror', in other words to an experience of the 'sublime',<sup>44</sup> influenced the Situationists, whose vital source for their sense of the psycho-geographic sublime, as Sadler has argued (1998: 75), was 'the poetic and awesome architecture depicted by Piranesi [the recognised master of the sublime] in the *Vedute* (Views) of Ancient and modern Rome, and his terrifying and dramatically lit *Carceri d'invenzione* (Imaginary Prisons)'.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Sadler 1998: 75, citing Diana Ketcham, *Le Desert de Retz: A Late Eighteenth-Century French Folly garden, the Artfull Landscape of Monsieur de Monville* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994: 3), citing C. H. Watelet, *Essai sur les jardins* (Paris 1774).

<sup>45</sup> Piranesi's visions would later be invoked in Constant's renderings of New Babylon. For a definition of Situationist psycho-geography, as a reverie conjured up in Guy Debord and Jorn's

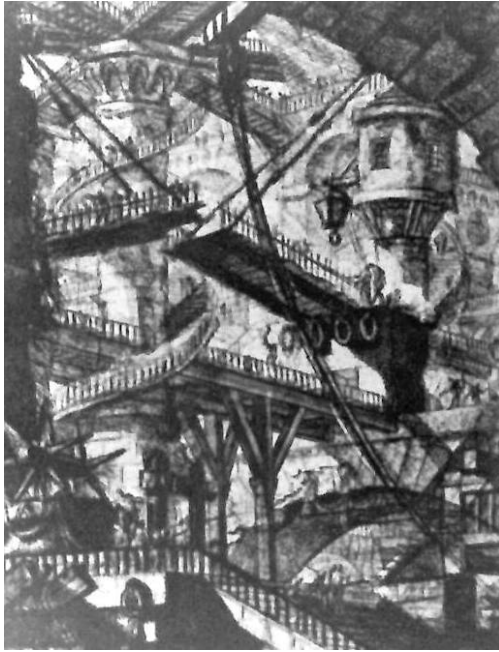


Fig. 78. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzioni*, plate VII, second state, 1760, etching

Situationism was attracted by the meditative, exotic and expressive side of the picturesque rather than by its lyrical and pleasant aspect, since for the Situationists beauty should be 'destroyed' when it did not promise happiness: 'Where the picturesque was too contrived it was simply dismissed as "annoying"'.<sup>46</sup> As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has written, the exitless space depicted in Piranesi's *Carceri d'invenzione* constitutes 'a prison which has neither inside nor outside', and [... ] is evidently one from which there is no escape [... ] but it is also one to which there is no access. The particular claustrophobia of [Piranesi's] vision is that it rejects the viewer even as it lures her in and exerts its weight on her.<sup>47</sup>

In the introduction to his *Antiquities of Rome* (1756), when recalling how the Eternal City, though stripped of its marble, its columns and decorations, continued

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*Mémoires*, and which 'represented a drift from the ideal and the rational to the extraordinary and the revolutionary', see Sadler (1998: 76–81).

<sup>46</sup> See Anon (1955) 'Projet d'embellissements rationnels de la ville de Paris', *Potlatch*, no 23, Paris, October, reprinted in *Potlatch* 1954–1957, pp. 177–80; Debord, 'Deux comptes rendus de derive,' cited in Sadler (1998: 73).

<sup>47</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1986) *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, New York: Methuen, p. 26; cited in Rinder (1997), in Morley (2010: 185).

to create an effect of continuous wonder, Piranesi introduced the notion of the unexpected and surprise obtained through absence in the experience of the picturesque. Smithson also extended the notion of the picturesque connected to landscape, by including in it a dialectic way of seeing things as the outcome of multiple relations and not as isolated objects. As T. J. Demos has written:

Rather than drawing on the familiar connotations of the picturesque, which suggest some immutable appearance or idealized static identity, Smithson found in it a way to stress the landscape's location within an intertwined network of abstract representations, shifting temporal conditions and multiple social uses. (Demos 2012: 122)

In his essay, 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape' (1973), Smithson argues for 'a dialectic of the landscape' (Flam 1996: 159) deriving from the theories of Uvedale Price and William Gilpin, and from Olmsted's response to them, as seen in his proposal ('Greensward' Plan 1858) for the construction of Central Park. According to Smithson, Price and Gilpin provided a *synthesis* of the contradictory *thesis* of smoothness, gentle curves and delicacy of nature, with the *antithesis* of terror, solitude and vastness of nature, thus formulating a notion of the 'picturesque' that related chance and change to the material order of nature.<sup>48</sup> He also argued that this heterogeneity encompassed in the notion of the 'picturesque' provided a way to change our static understandings of landscape:

The contradictions of the 'picturesque' depart from a static formalistic view of nature. The picturesque, far from being an inner movement of the mind, is based on real land; it precedes the mind and its material external existence. We cannot take a one-sided view of the landscape within this dialectic. A park can no longer be seen as a 'thing in itself', but rather as a process of ongoing relationships existing in a physical region – the park becomes a 'thing for us'. (Flam 1996: 160)

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<sup>48</sup> As Smithson has written, the above separation consists of the separation between the notions of the beautiful and sublime as Edmund Burke defined them, in his *Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). See Flam 1996:158–60.

To this dialectic notion of the picturesque, Smithson added the idea of the unfinished connecting with the unexpected, arguing that Olmsted's parks are never finished, since 'they remain the carriers of the unexpected and of contradiction on all levels of human activity, be it social, political or natural' (Flam 1996: 160). Being always subject to unexpected changes as a result of viewers' changing positions around its two volumes, *In Site Compression* became promoted to a similar status of never being 'finished', which potentially enhanced the experience of the notion of the 'picturesque' as defined by Smithson.

Because of its labyrinthine shape, the multiple perspectives offered by *In Site Compression* originated a sense of decentring to viewers,<sup>49</sup> to which was added that of wandering dislocated and disoriented around its two volumes as the result of the continuous appearance and disappearance of others. To summarise, the main room of the installation, positioned on the borderline between (art) object and (architectural) space due to its labyrinthine shape, pointed to the differences between near and far, nomadic and sedentary space, while the blurring of its volumes created encounters between presence and absence, isolation and community.

### **The phenomenal body and the others**

The body is our means of existing in the world and, as the perceiving subject, is directly implicated in definitions of space and its parameters. The spatial relationship between objects and the body is experienced by the individual before becoming aware of distinctions between form and content. Here lies the importance of the tactile aspect in the perception of *In Site Compression*, which gained its meaning and rationale only during the bodily incursion of the viewer into its space.

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<sup>49</sup> Theories of the subject as 'decentred' emerged in the 1970s in poststructuralist theory, which proposed that the correct way to view our condition as human subjects is fragmented, multiple and decentred by unconscious desires and anxieties, by an interdependent and differential relationship to the world, or by pre-existing social structures. (Bishop, 2005). Poststructuralist theory refers to a group of thinkers that includes Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan, and insists on plurality and instability of meaning (see Smith 2001: 189–92).



Fig. 79

The installation's unitary form presented a kind of visual and physical obstruction within the gallery's space where it was situated, despite the fact that the two volumes created a narrow path between them and the walls of the gallery where visitors could walk. The smaller and more restricted the path offered by the installation, the stronger became the tactile perception of the gallery and installation, as the narrow space that was left turned the viewer's attention inward on themselves.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, their cloudy vision through the translucent tissue allowed a distancing from the immediate situation and led to a heightened awareness of the phenomenal space of their body in relation to the space of the installation. This was a situation that, as Robert Irwin proposed for site-conditioned/determined works, followed 'the principles of phenomenal, conditional and responsive art by placing the individual observer in context' (Irwin, cited in Doherty 2009: 43).

The process of basic perception is something we do at every moment and we almost always do it without a second thought. Like every site-specific

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<sup>50</sup> See Morris (1978: 165) 'Our encounter with objects in space forces us to reflect on ourselves, which can never become 'other', which can never become objects for our external examination.'

installation, *In Site Compression* demanded that viewers enter in some sense into the artist's place. Again, as Irwin has said, a site-determined installation requires viewers to ask themselves the same questions the artist has faced: 'Does this piece, situation or space make sense? How do I feel about it? What does it mean to me?' (Irwin, cited in Doherty 2009: 44, 45). What applies to the artist also applies to viewers, which charges the viewers with an individual responsibility in the perceiving process. Hence the ability of *In Site Compression* to place viewers in its context could be 'measured' as a qualitative factor in the experience of it. The empty space of the gallery was flattened out by the work's two volumes and what remained was converted into a trajectory, a temporal movement through the space around them. This trajectory, rather than the points formed by the visitor's movements, constituted a graph of their functions in the site. The remaining empty space was an invitation to the viewer to move, to stand still, and to select a perspective or position. In other words, it was meant to function as a tangible sign of the viewer's perceptions and experiences connected with the time spent in it.



Fig. 80

The labyrinthine shape of *In Site Compression* therefore encouraged viewers to move around and through it in order to experience it, and their physical participation in the space and 'heightened awareness of other visitors who become part of the piece', as Claire Bishop has expressed (Bishop 2005: 11), turned them into the subject of this site-specific installation. Moreover, being engaged in the situation created by the installation (i.e. choosing to follow a particular direction) placed a greater responsibility on them, meaning that the work became part of the viewer's engagement with the world and could therefore be 'regarded as emancipatory' (Bishop 2005: 58, 76–7).

*In Site Compression* constructed for each visitor the plane of a dual experience: alone and together. When forming a trajectory around the installation, viewers were accompanied by the figures, gestures and steps of others, which constantly repositioned them. As a result, their bodies ceased to be an expression of identity and became an active part of the process of seeing, and, by seeing others through the transparent material, they became aware of being together in the same space at a particular moment (Noeth 2015: 146). Moreover, the work's construction permitted only one person to occupy a particular position at any one time. Consequently, the body of each visitor was emphasised as a body in interaction, challenging visitors 'to take responsibility for [their] own movements and to understand that they mobilize and actualize not only [their] own body but also the bodily space that it inhabits, which is also always a shared space', as Patricia Falguieres has written of Olafur Eliasson's installations (Falguieres 2016: 150).

*In Site Compression* countered the presumption that the body is both an expression of identity and a shared body. The encounter and accumulation of viewers' bodies in the exhibition space raised the notion of a 'collective body', a term borrowed from Sandra Noeth. In her attempt to define the collective, Noeth has written:

Its point of departure is the heterogeneity, contradiction and simultaneity of all the participating subjects and objects: it does not seek to resolve or unify differences. The collective distrusts the ideology of consensus and unison and

notably puts up resistance to itself and makes a stand against the notion of finding and fixing something in a particular form. In that sense the collective is always already opposed to its final realization and remains locked into its own impossibility. (Noeth 2015: 146)

In the situation proposed by *In Site Compression* the collective body was the means by which viewers could experience the installation as ‘a socialized experience of encountering yourself among others’,<sup>51</sup> and perceive it anew in their being-with-another. Moreover, by drawing attention to the overlapping images of the visitors, the installation’s translucent material transformed the space into a sort of stage, on which the moving individuals became performers (Schneider 2002: 33). This does not mean that *In Site Compression* was about participation – if that means ‘taking part’ in something that already exists or has been predetermined – but, rather, was an invitation to partake of and engage with it in a way that would have consequences for the visitor’s sense of responsibility in their relationship with the installation and its spatio-temporal situation, and for the installation itself, since it depended on the visitor’s participation to be completed.

### **Existence in time and time-specificity**

What was the relation of *In Site Compression* to time? And in what way could the experience of its site-specificity be associated with the notion of time? In order to come into being – meaning, to become evident as a dimension of a person’s being – time needs the person for which it allows things to happen (a succession of events); or, as Merleau-Ponty has written, time, in order to be experienced, ‘presupposes a view of time’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 477). People’s experience of time cannot be measured in the way a sequence of points on a graph can be measured, but emerges as the experience of something that ‘moves away from us, like the landscape seen through a railway carriage window’, and not as a succession of moments that can be observed,

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<sup>51</sup> Brian Hatton writing about Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past* (1974) (cited in Bishop 2005: 73).

a 'succession of ec-stasies' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 487–8). In his analysis of time in *An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889) (trans. as *Time and Free Will*), Henri Bergson distinguished the scientific concept of time as something divisible into equal intervals and measurable by clocks from the intuitive experience of real time as a continuous duration where every moment is unique (see Mautner 2005: 73). But while Bergson proposed introspection as a means to reveal a continuing free self that is present throughout the flow of time, Merleau-Ponty argues that the only way people can conceive time, and from what it arises, is through their relation to things. Through the relation of time with objects, people are able to understand their relation with both time and the world. Their relation to things, and their significance for them, presupposes a certain point of view from a place where they position themselves, which is in the world and the present: 'Past and future exist only too unmistakably in the world, they exist in the present' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 478). This attitude is consistent with Martin Heidegger's notion of temporality: 'Temporality temporalizes itself as future-which-lapses-into-the-past-by-coming-into-present' (cited in Merleau-Ponty 2002: 488). And since time cannot be felt with the senses (as one cannot see one's own face), the meaning of time is founded on people's identification with it; or, as Merleau-Ponty says, 'I am myself, time, a time which "abides" and does not "flow" or "change"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 489). The experience of *In Site Compression* necessarily existed in time, as viewers' ongoing immediate experience of it could not be separated from their physical presence in the real space of its two volumes. Viewers' entire experience of the work involved both perception of its space during their wandering around its two volumes, and the experience of real time as a continuous entity of each separate instant between the viewers, the site (the installation and the gallery) and other viewers. As Merleau-Ponty has written, 'It is by communicating with the world that we communicate with ourselves... We hold time in its entirety, and we are present to ourselves because we are present to the world' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 493). By making its relationships to space and time material, *In Site Compression* aimed to provide the 'space' for

the viewer, as the observing and embodied subject, to become aware of the fact that 'being conscious is nothing but to "be at"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 493).

The spatial intervention of *In Site Compression* in Gallery 7 created an interruption in the concrete mass of the city, and also seemed to function as a temporal pause in visitors' routine activities, giving them the opportunity to experience a 're-conjunction between the time of observation and the accelerated and accelerating time of urban contemporaneity', as Mario Codognato has written of Eliasson's *Baroque Baroque* (2016) (Codognato 2015: 60).

In relation to the notion of time in urban contemporaneity, *In Site Compression* created a lapse in time and space that had its own unique narration and obeyed its own rules, as far as the rhythmical changes of time and spatial parameters are concerned. Instead of being just a 'void between events...a pause when nothing is happening' (Smithson 1996: 34), the installation not only transformed the gallery's place but, in turn, actuated by the movements and operations of the viewers who oriented it and temporalised it, was turned into 'a practiced place', an expression used by De Certeau who defined the difference between space and place in the way these are related to the notion of time:

In relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of time) and modified by the transformation caused by successive contexts. (De Certeau 1984:117)

Additionally, the ephemeral character of *In Site Compression* revealed its site-specificity as coincident with its 'time-specificity'. The term 'time-specificity', declaring the installation's time-determined character as analogous to 'site-specificity', is connected with artworks that are sited temporarily. Such short-lived site-specific works manifest their potential as sites of 'critical engagement, fleeting intensity and intervention', and 'resonate with the precarious nature of space', as Judith Rugg argues in her book *Exploring Site-Specific Art, Issues of Space and Internationalism* (2010: 2).

Some site-specific works of art are not located in one place. Despite originating in a particular place, they encourage and incorporate rumination on them by a wide variety of people over an extended period and involve a protracted period of negotiation. And although documentation cannot replace first-hand experience, the space they occupy becomes 'geographically wider' and their life elongated, since their temporality gains new dimensions. The specific temporality of Francis Alÿs' *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002) in Lima, where Alÿs took an indeterminate natural form – a sand dune – and, with the help of volunteers, moved it four inches, contained traces of the present rather than the past, and, instead of providing 'that dimension of escape and absence that we call the past' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 480), preserved people's perception through 'stories' created about them and which persist in the present. Other site-specific works express a sense of 'incompleteness', a term used by Robert Harbison to describe how Alÿs' work could be revisited by the artist in a different time and place (Harbison 2005: 58). Such temporal site-specific artworks gain a kind of monumentality, in a way, a kind of eternity, in the sense that they can be restarted, the way time does.

The temporality of site-specific works is also enhanced if one considers them as 'a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activities', as Bourriaud has proposed (Bourriaud 2002: 19).<sup>52</sup> This is seen in *In Site Compression*, which, as already argued, did not comprise a finished product to be contemplated by its 'subjects', but required their active participation for its spatio-temporary situation to be completed.

The particular significance of *In Site Compression* ended as soon as the exhibition was over. If it were to be exhibited in another place at a different time, the site would be necessarily different from that for which it was created

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<sup>52</sup> In *Postproduction* (2002), Nicolas Bourriaud argues: 'In this new form of culture [that unites the various configurations of the artistic use of the world gathered under the term postproduction], which one might call a culture of use or a culture of activity, the artwork functions as the temporary terminal of a network of interconnected elements, like a narrative that extends and reinterprets preceding narratives.' This argument can be related to the use of the documentation of a site-specific installation to create a new one, as will be analysed further below.

– the specific gallery in Athens. In such a case it would be converted into a ‘heterotopia’, to borrow Foucault’s term, a space that resides somewhere else. In order to better understand the word heterotopia (which derives from ancient Greek – *ἕτερος τόπος* (*heteros topos*), meaning ‘other place’), Foucault used as an example the space of the cinema:

The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible...thus it is that the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space’. (Foucault, cited in Doherty 2009: 53, 54)

The heterotopia created by the possible ‘movement’ of the site-specific installation *In Site Compression* is linked to the meaning of ‘heterochrony’, another ancient Greek word – *ἕτερος χρόνος* (*heteros chronos*), meaning ‘other time’. Foucault interprets this as the ‘slices in time, which [is to say that they] open onto what might be termed...’. Corresponding to his argument that heterochrony is linked ‘to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect’,<sup>53</sup> I consider that each newly constructed installation based on repositioning its components in another site would be an act of displacement, comprising both the notions of heterotopia and heterochrony.

In the case of the installation’s documentation, the work’s relation to real experience in real time and space would be broken and replaced by a series of stills or video recordings. On the other hand, documentary material consists of new material existing in another real time and place, and calls for the viewer’s presence to be experienced. This shift in the real time of the installation to the time of its reproduction is particularly important due to its significance as a site-specific installation, and results from its shift from a literal to a ‘functional’ site.

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<sup>53</sup> Foucault has opposed these heterochronies to the ‘heterochronies of indefinitely accumulating time, for example museums and libraries’. ‘The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time...the project of organizing a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity’ (quoted in Doherty 2009: 53).

James Meyer has made a distinction between these two notions of site:

The literal is an actual location, a singular place. The artist's intervention conforms to the physical constraints of the situation even if (or precisely when) it would subject this to critique... In contrast, the functional site may or may not incorporate a physical place. Instead it is a process, an operation occurring between sites...it is an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places, and things... (Meyer, cited in Doherty 2009: 38)

*In Site Compression* was unique, since it reflected the actual place of Gallery 7 and was determined by the gallery's physical parameters and the spatio-temporal relationships that arose from them. When the exhibition ended, its documentation could convert it into a functional work (as defined by Meyer). But when exhibited in another place (i.e. for the viva of this research), this reproduction material would become part of a mobile site, which 'marked' and 'abandoned' the place for which *In Site Compression* was initially designed.<sup>54</sup> This mobile site will be proof that the installation courted its own destruction, that it was wilfully temporary and that its nature was not to endure but to end, a quality attributed to the 'functional work' that refuses the 'intransigence of literal site specificity', as Meyer has argued in his '*The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity*' (1995) (Meyer, cited in Doherty 2009: 38). This reveals another contradiction in the life of *In Site Compression*: its site-specificity was connected not only to its own temporality but also, over time, to the transformation of the site of its existence.

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<sup>54</sup> This installation named After '*In Site Compression 2007*' (2017), was realised on March 2017, on the occasion of the viva exhibition of this research at 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London. See Figs 105–116.

## **Conclusion: Displacement in(to) future**

In exploring site-specific art's connection to notions of time and space, this research has examined three site-specific installations, *Central Corridor*, *Seven Windows Divided by Two* and *In Site Compression*, which have revealed a variety of factors determining their integrity, site and notion of time. The importance of the viewer's first-hand presence in the work's space has exposed a number of antithetical aspects in their perception. Contradictory notions of the self-reflexive and fragmented subject, object and situation, absence and presence, public and private, domestic and social, temporary and permanent, time sequences and the freezing of time, have been discussed in an attempt to justify these installations' claims to political and philosophical significance. In this conclusion these claims are re-examined alongside the question of whether the limits in the double experience of the works' contradictions can be accurately determined, or whether they are in a state of perpetual redefinition corresponding to the innately dynamic, elastic and constantly fluctuating context and milieu of the site-specific work of art.

### **Participation, alone and together**

In this research special importance is given to the significance of the viewer's bodily immersion in the space articulated by the literal components of the site-specific installations *Seven Windows Divided by Two* and *In Site Compression*. The movement through the sculptures' surrounding fields was investigated first through the prism of Minimalism, recalling Robert Morris's argument that even though viewers' experience of the object should involve many considerations so the work keeps its place in the expanded situation that comprised the space around it, the main interest should be the sculpture itself: 'The object itself has not become less important. It has merely become less *self*-important' (Morris 1966: 20–3). Subsequent post-Minimalist practices attempted to redefine place as the enactment of a 'situation', by investigating further the relationship

between subject and space, while within the practice of 'anarchitecture' the demarcation of place was no longer dictated by the boundaries of form, but was released by locomotion.<sup>55</sup>

'Anarchitectural' projects (a term coined by Gordon Matta-Clark in 1973) pointed to an alternative attitude to buildings, concerned not with the gaps that existed within or beyond architecture, but with their 'reference to movement space' (Mariño 2004: 93). Matta-Clark's interventions of undoing or unbuilding defined 'anarchitecture' as a kinaesthetic process, an investigation of the space in between. As Melanie Mariño has written, these in-between spaces are bracketed by several terms, such as 'utility, property, commerce, circumscribing a situational practice that reframed sculpture's tendency to aestheticize architecture, on one hand, and architecture's capitulation to commercial rationalization, on the other' (Mariño 2004: 95). As a result, Matta-Clark's *Splitting* not only pointed to the abolition of the boundaries between inside and outside, sculpture and architecture, building and landscape, but also commented on the security of the middle-class American suburban home. Correspondingly, Rachel Whiteread's *House* 'filtered the groundlessness of architecture through the disintegration of domestic and social spaces' (Mariño 2004: 98).

In an analogous way, the site-specific installations *Seven Windows...*, *Central Corridor* and *In Site Compression* became part of the built or daily environment in Athens by transcending the boundaries between inner and outer space, the personal/individual and public scale, the void and the full, as well as between movement and stasis. The Athenian cityscape offers a profusion of signs and spaces, a plurality that has been part of the city's cultural character since antiquity. *Seven Windows...* and *In Site Compression*, by pointing to the interstices between absence and presence, public and private, and domestic and social, constituted a comment on the social contradictions that underlie Athenian urban actuality.

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<sup>55</sup> Anarchitecture, as title rather than practice, also identified an informal association of artists who convened in Richard's Nona's studio as well as restaurants and bars, where its members improvised collaborative proposals concerned with 'metaphoric voids: gaps, leftover spaces, places that were not developed.' See Mariño (2004).

The exploration of each of my site-specific installations was organised around the importance of the physical immersion of the viewers in the installations' space. In this context, the body of the viewer in the space, the boundaries of which are circumscribed by each installation, ceases to be another object in objective space, the body as it actually is, and becomes diverted into 'a virtual body', with its 'phenomenal place' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 291) defined and articulated by the work's literal components. Conversely, the tangible elements of each installation gained unity, and their synthesis was effected in the perception of viewers during their movement around the work's space. The viewer's heightened bodily experience of the installations, which resulted from the sensory immediacy of the elements, could be regarded as activating and emancipatory – activating, since it was not just the result of visual contemplation; and emancipatory, since it placed responsibility on viewers' engagement in space and therefore, by implication, in the social-political arena (Bishop 2005: 11).

The installations turned viewers' attention towards themselves, not only because in the absence of an object our perception is necessarily reflected back onto ourselves, but also because of the special spatial framework articulated by each installation. This effect was the product of the tissue in *In Site Compression*, the reflective Plexiglas of *Central Corridor* and *Seven Windows...*, and the experience of confinement created by entering into the narrowest areas of all three structures. This idea of the self-reflexive, centred and activated viewer is contradicted by that of the decentred and fragmented viewer produced by the multiplication of perspectives viewers experienced while moving around the works' components. In her book *Installation Art* (2005), Claire Bishop proposed the notion of an affinity between the multiple perspectives of installations and poststructuralist theories of the subject as decentred, which were developed in the 1970s by theorists such as Barthes, Foucault and Lacan. Poststructuralist theory argued that each person is intrinsically dislocated and divided, at odds with themselves, as a counterpoint to the rational and centred humanist subject consistent with the implied place

of the viewer in the Renaissance system of single-point perspective. The notion of the decentred subject also influenced artists and critics of the 1970s, who were sympathetic to feminist and postcolonial theory and who regarded the centred subject as consistent with a masculinist, racist and conservative ideology: 'There is no one "right" way of looking at the world, nor any privileged place from which such judgements can be made' (Bishop 2005: 13). In the multi-perspectival space of my site-specific installations, viewers realised that 'there [was] no position from which you [could] actually see everything at once' (Kelly 1997: 27). Even though there were precisely defined 'paths' they could follow when entering the space, they could also choose multiple directions, which allowed for a more multi-perspectival experience.<sup>56</sup> This multi-perspectival dimension of the installations – and, by extension, of the world – resulted in the viewer's feeling of being decentred. Hence, in the spatial frames of *Central Corridor, Seven Windows...* and *In Site Compression*, viewers were called on to experience themselves as initially self-reflexive, centred subjects of conscious will (hence activated and emancipated), while also recognising their own fragmentation due to the decentring effects of the installations' multi-perspectival environments.

In a spirit of critical and political contemporaneity, my site-specific installations addressed the issue of presence in and of time. Analysis of these works in this text, along with that of the experience of the viewers as single entities, has tested out the possibility of involving viewers in a shared space, of coexistence and togetherness-with-others. The blurred view they received of *In*

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<sup>56</sup> The late 1960s witnessed a growth of critical writing on perspective, much of which inflected early 20<sup>th</sup>-century perspective theories with the idea of a panoptic or masculine gaze. In *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1924), the art historian Erwin Panofsky argued that Renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical 'world' depicted in the painting; the line of perspective with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture was connected to the eyes of the viewer who stood before it. A hierarchical relationship was understood to exist between the centred viewer and the 'world' of the painting spread before them, and Panofsky therefore equated Renaissance perspective with the rational and self-reflexive Cartesian subject ('I think therefore I am'). This hierarchical model was disrupted by artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in Cubist still lifes, several points of view are represented simultaneously (see Bishop 2005: 12).

*Site Compression* from behind the semi-translucent tissue, the restricted sight of the other people through the small windows of *Seven Windows...*, and the distorted images of moving figures and optical games produced by the neon lights of *Central Corridor*, created a need for communication beyond sight, as could be seen by viewers' reactions: hiding, gesticulating, grimacing or even 'greeting' one another loudly. In other words, the spatio-temporal frame created by the installations not only allowed people to experience the presence of others, it also transformed them into interactive singularities – 'collective' bodies aware of their being-with-another – and allowed them develop a relation with each other. In this way, the installations constructed a shared experience where viewers merged with the work and each other: alone and together.

The space–time frame encoded in the installations' components therefore set up a dialectical relationship between the antitheses of self-reflexive/fragmented subject, object/situation, absence/presence, public/private, and alone/together. The complexity of these antitheses, and the potential engagement of viewers with all the shifting relations of time and space, could potentially undermine habitual passivity and increase awareness of their relativity and relevance to each other.

### **Moving site and documentation**

The temporary site-responsive condition of the site-specific installations *Central Corridor*, *Seven Windows...* and *In Site Compression* investigated by this research is further discussed here for its implications for the documentation in and of site-specific art. In approaching the site as a set of dynamic relationships subject to the 'event' of its viewers' 'performance', the site-specific installation and its site remain always to be defined. By speculating on its constant transformation, site-specific art therefore seems to resist a final or definitive site, as any hypothetical change entails a shift in its spatio-temporal relationships. Consequently, the ephemeral character of *Central Corridor*, *Seven Windows...* and *In Site Compression*, as both literal constructions and situations that require the participation of the viewers for completion, predicts their future

absence from the site for which they were initially designed. Here lies the role of documentation within site-specific practice. As Nick Kaye has argued in his book *Site-Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation* (2000), whether in the work or subsequent to it, 'documentation has a place within site-specific practice precisely because it explicitly presents itself in the absence of its object' (Kaye, 2000: 218). Being always other to the events and objects it recalls, documentation finds an affinity with site-specific practice's perpetual mutation.

The documentary material is divided into two formats: photographic shots and recorded videos. There are two genres of photographs, divided according to their iconographic synthesis. The first consists of neutral views of the installations fitted exactly into the picture. These external views from a distance convey only the optical experience of the installation and would normally be arranged in a narrative pictorial sequence. The second comprises shots from random angles, in which there was no preoccupation with finding the right views. Instead, these images aimed to capture the viewpoint of a person moving around inside the works, in order to illustrate the physical experience of the viewer. However, perspectival vision is not respected in these photographs, and their possible display in arrangements of different orientations would be an attempt to offer viewers outside the photographs' pictorial space some sequence of physical and temporal perception. In the case of the video recordings, the structure of these corresponds to the sequence of events and the installations' performative dimension. Even though the medium of video provides a better record of space and sequential events than the static medium of photography, photographic documentation can solve more effectively the problem of translating space onto a plane, and movement into stasis, through its division of the whole into individual views. Being inherently static and able to 'embalm' time (Basin 1980: 242), photographs do greater justice to the spatial fractures and discontinuities of each installation, as they are connected to the viewer's movements over time. By contrast, video recordings emphasise the fluidities and continuities of space and time in each installation, and impose on viewers the real time of their own duration.

Recorded and photographic documentations are not intended to fill the void left by the loss of the 'actual' site-specific installations, nor even to represent them. Rather, the exhibition of photographic and video documentation constitutes a new installation that establishes its own spatio-temporal frame and aims to reveal aspects of the viewer's perception and experience during their bodily immersion in it, which differs from those of the initial works. Some experiences are irrecoverable, like the warmth emitted by the neon corridor lights of *Central Corridor*, the interrupted views of the cityscape through the windows of *Seven Windows...*, the sense of bodily confinement in the space between the volumes and gallery walls of *In Site Compression*. However, these effects might be counterbalanced by the noise of the deconstruction of the PP wallpaper in the corridor part of *In Site Compression*, the sense of dislocation caused by the juxtaposition of the parallel projection of optical phenomena recorded by the video recorder and/or camera of *Central Corridor*, the gestures of communication between viewers in *Seven Windows...*, and the constantly shifting shadows of viewers projected onto the surfaces of all three pieces, which, by coinciding with one another, make the experience of sharing the space with others more palpable and involving. But the most important experience is that of the palimpsest of sites – the initial and subsequent one for each installation – which coincide in a transient space and an equation of time. In my opinion, this displacement materialises an important contradiction intrinsic to site-specific art: its fixture within a specific site and speculation about its transformation, caused not only by its temporary nature but by the perpetually changing and unpredictable behaviour of the viewers required for its completion. In the pages of this thesis, which follows the initial exhibition of *Central Corridor*, *Seven Windows...* and *In Site Compression*, and anticipates the site-specific installation of their documentation for the viva, an analogous displacement occurs: the sites of the documentation presented become merged with the 'site' of this written text.

This research constitutes 'a narrative structure which has the status of spatial syntaxes' (De Certeau 1984: 115) – another 'space', in the sense that it is 'composed of intersections of mobile elements' and 'actuated by

the ensemble of movements deployed within it' (De Certeau 1984: 117). In articulating this space, the function of my site-specific installations is similar to that of the *xoana* – the Greek statuettes whose invention is attributed to Daedalus and which marked out limits by moving themselves – in that they emphasise 'the curves and movements of space' (De Certeau 1984: 129). Similarly, my thesis constitutes a kind of a 'space between', located spatially and temporally between the two life stages of my installations – their initial one and the future installation of their documentation for the viva.

By locating my thesis between these two stages in the life of my site-specific installations, I have located the paradoxical conflation of the 'this-has-been' with the 'this-will-be', as Roland Barthes argued about the anterior future of the photographic record.<sup>57</sup> I have also loaded the future with memory, and this memory (the documentary material) seeps spontaneously in the future (the new site-specific installation), marking and/or representing in stages the passage of time in a site coincidence. The outcome remains to be experienced.

### **By a way of a conclusion...**

In this research, the exploration of the relationship between space, time and the human presence in site-specific art has revealed a series of apparent contradictions in the experience of site and notion of time, which are in a state of perpetual redefinition corresponding to the innately dynamic, elastic and constantly fluctuating context and of the site-specific work of art.

The ephemeral act of physically experiencing the site-specific work of art, which announces the importance of the body of the viewer for its accomplishment, connects the notion of time to the spatial relationships between viewer, location and work. It thus introduces site-specificity in the 'performative' sense, understood as the viewer's bodily participation in the spatio-temporal situation of the site-specific work.

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<sup>57</sup> In his *Camera Lucida* (1981) Barthes wrote: 'By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future', thus considering the photograph as an equivalent medium for presenting 'a catastrophe that has already occurred' (Barthes 1981: 96).

The firsthand presence of the spectator immersed within the artwork is explored in my research as a means to expose antithetical aspects in their perception, while drawing on a wider imaginative engagement with the site and its conditions of access. This imaginative engagement is overlaid onto the phenomenal experience of the installation. Moreover, the temporality of my site-specific installations, which is investigated for its implications for the documentation in and of site-specific art, has adjusted the three stages of this research's chronological sequence:

1. The initial site-specific installations
2. Site-writing: thesis with images exploring the paradox of representing site-specific work on the page
3. Installation of the documentation of the initial site-specific installations, which constitute new site-specific installations named *After Central Corridor*, 2003 (2017), *After Seven Windows Divided by Two*, 2004 (2017), and *After In Site Compression*, 2007 (2017). Correspondingly, the documentation of these new installations (Figs 81–116 below) establishes its own spatio-temporal frame.

Finally, I would like to refer to my research as the 'site' where both my site-specific practice and the writing of my thesis as spatio-temporal procedures are positioned in a contradictory space between mobilisation and specificity, resting out of place, but with timely precision. I propose that the contribution to knowledge advanced in my research is that by adjusting the limits between the double experience of the fluidities and continuities of space and time, on the one hand, and their ruptures and disconnections, on the other, the literality of site-specific art may allow viewers to think and experience apparent contradictions as sustaining relations.

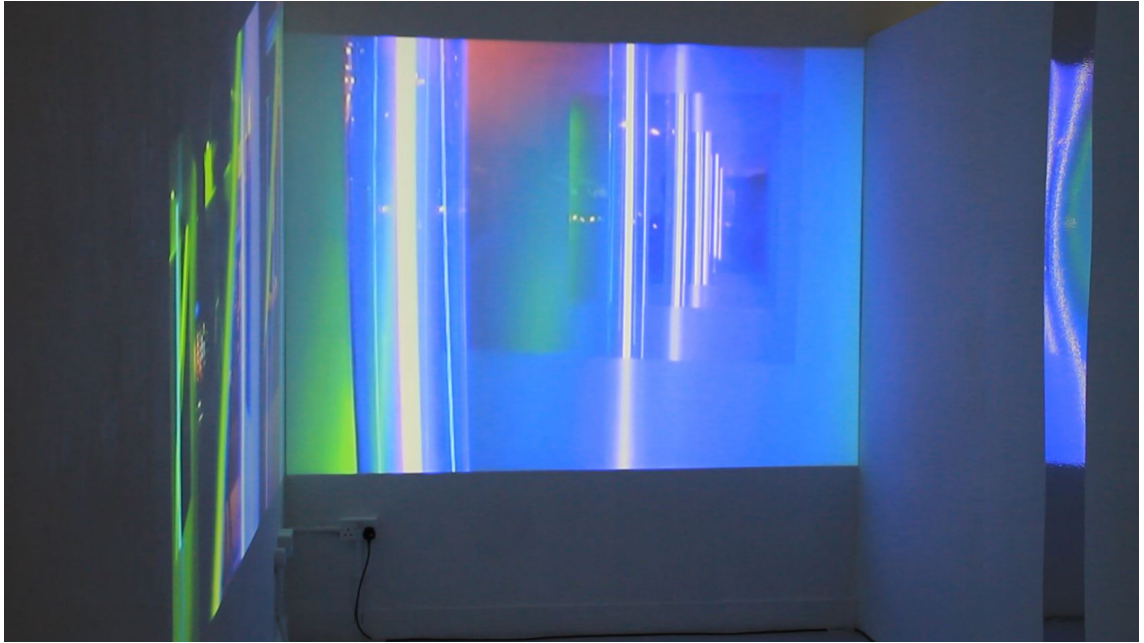


Fig. 81. Vasiliki Christouli, *After Seven Windows Divided by Two* 2004, 2017, 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London, video projection, adhesive, reflexive film, dimensions variable



Fig. 82

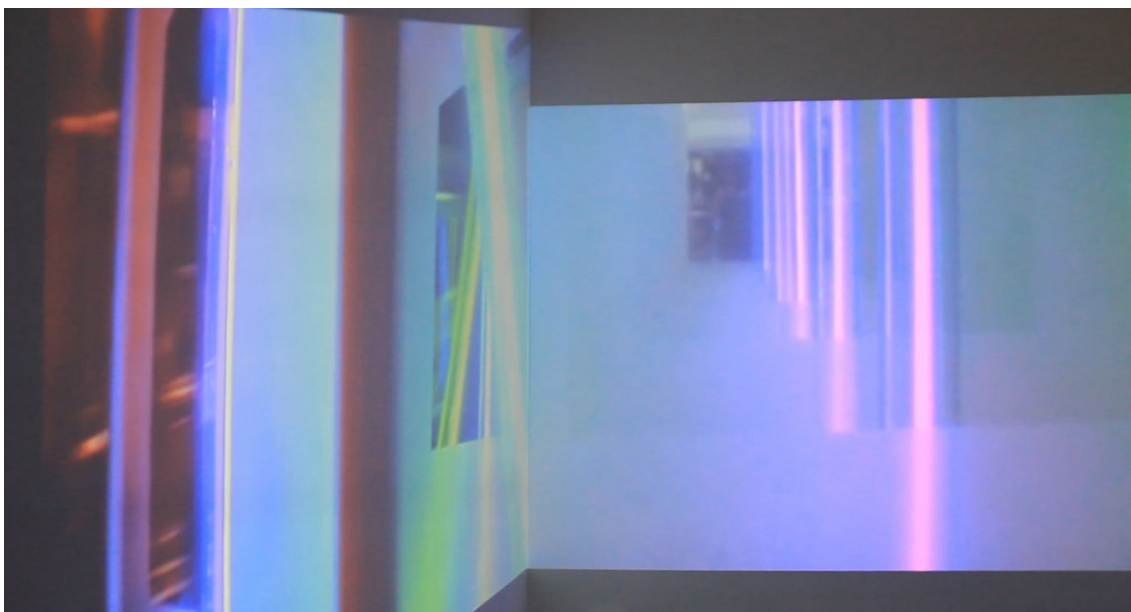


Fig. 83

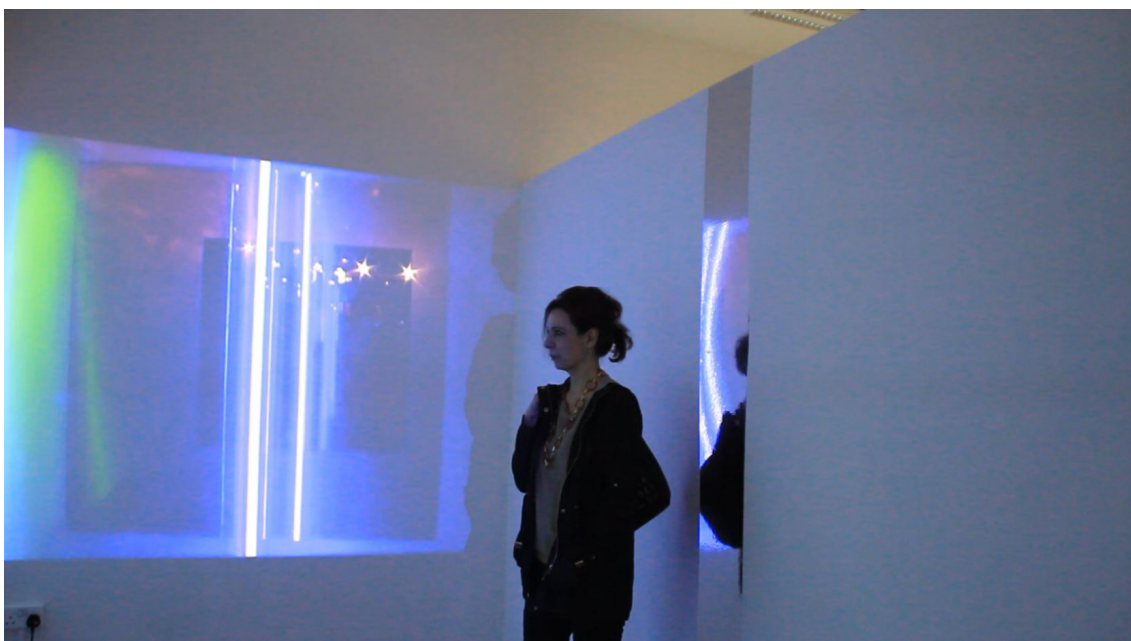


Fig. 84

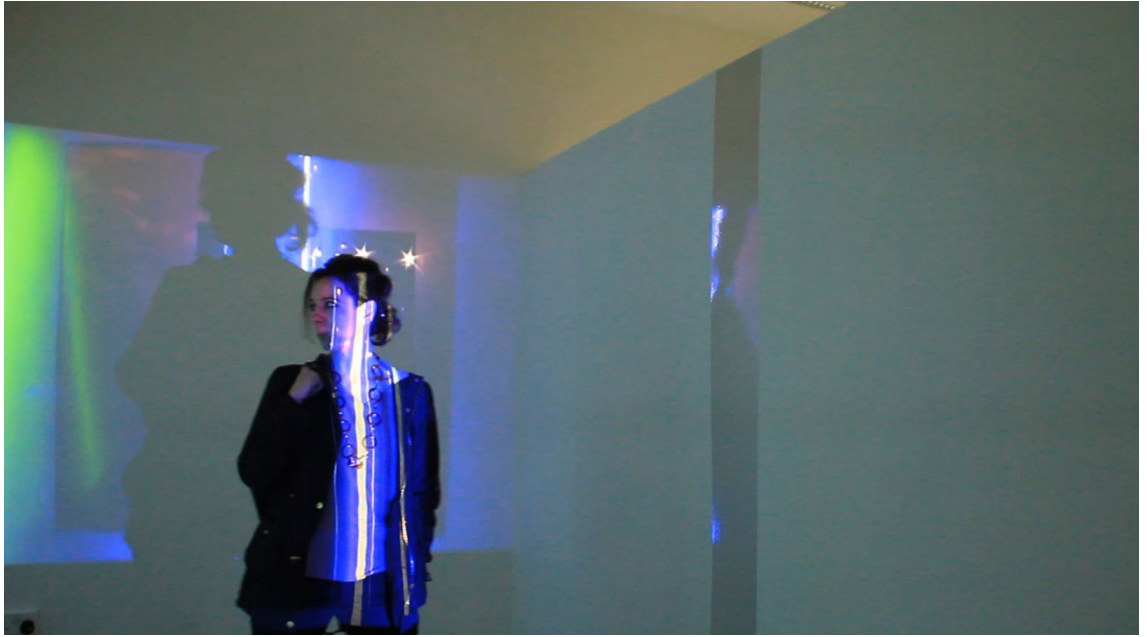


Fig. 85

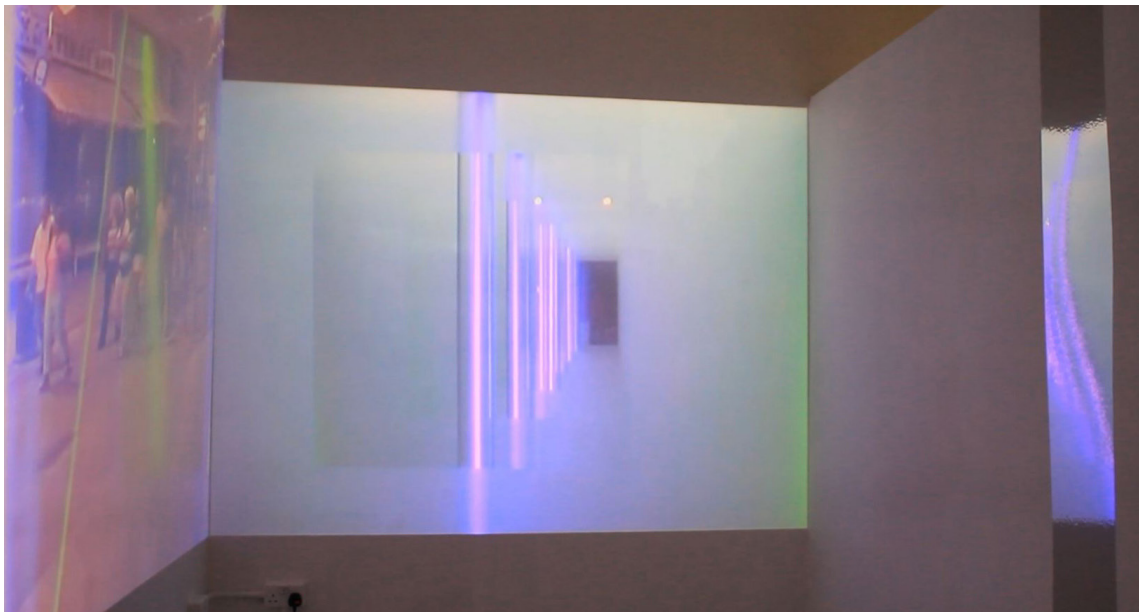


Fig. 86

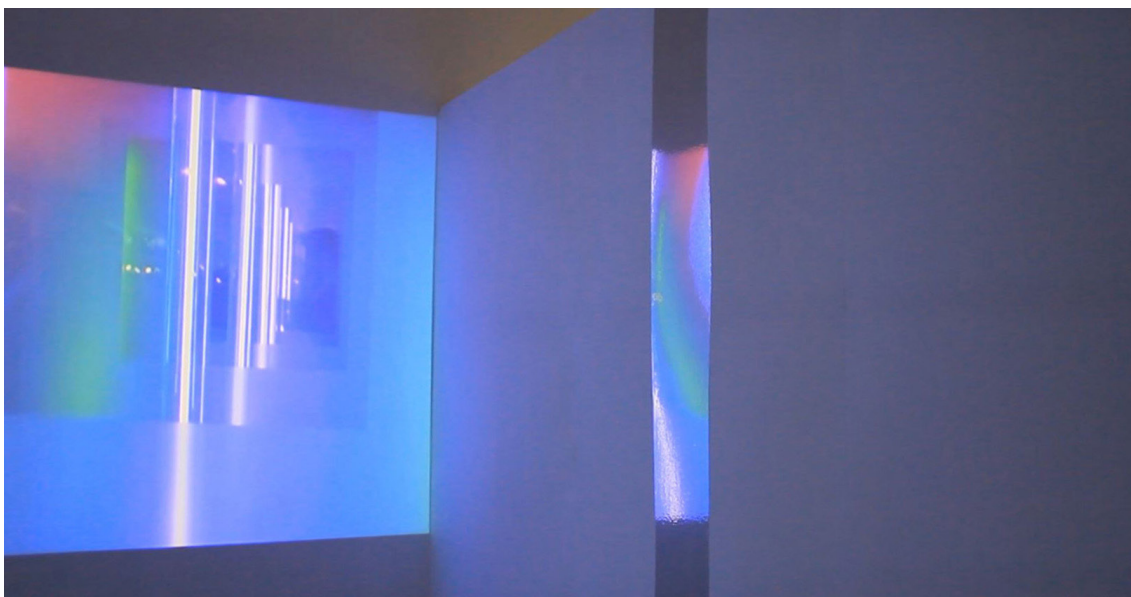


Fig. 87



Fig. 88

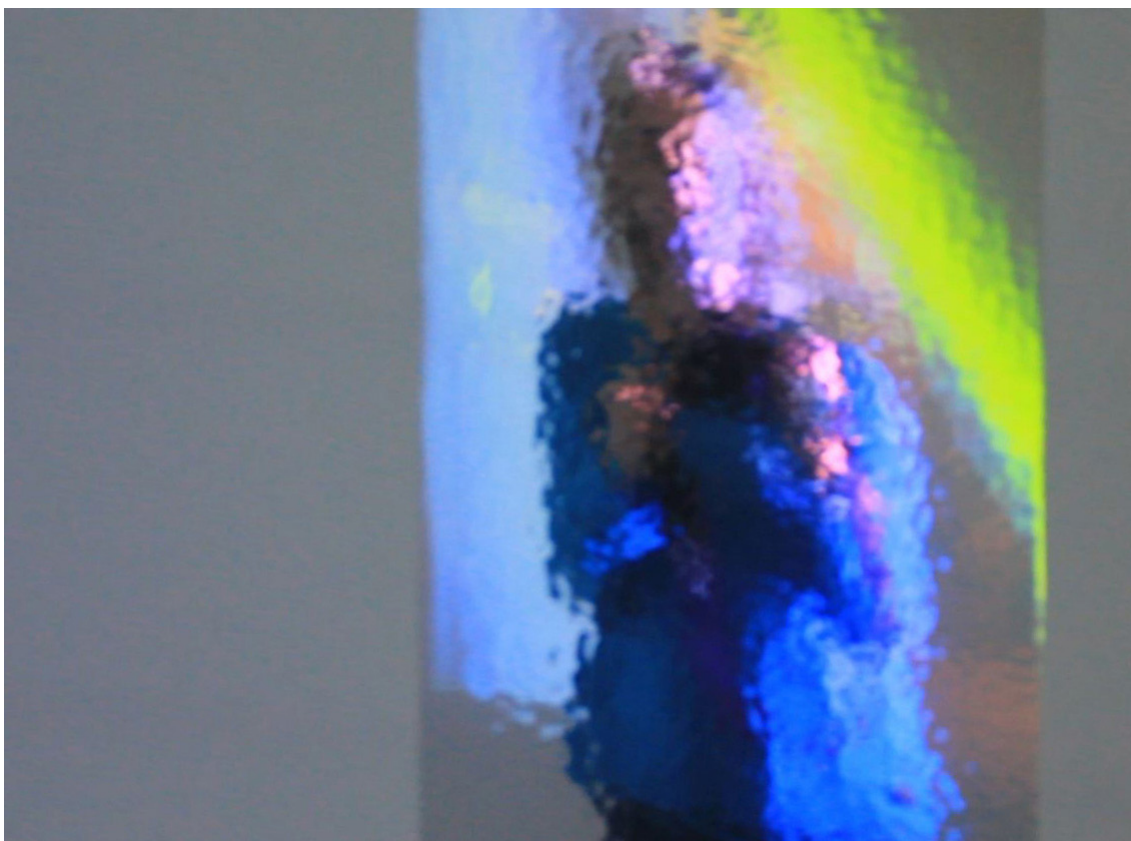


Fig. 89



Fig. 90



Fig. 91



Fig. 92

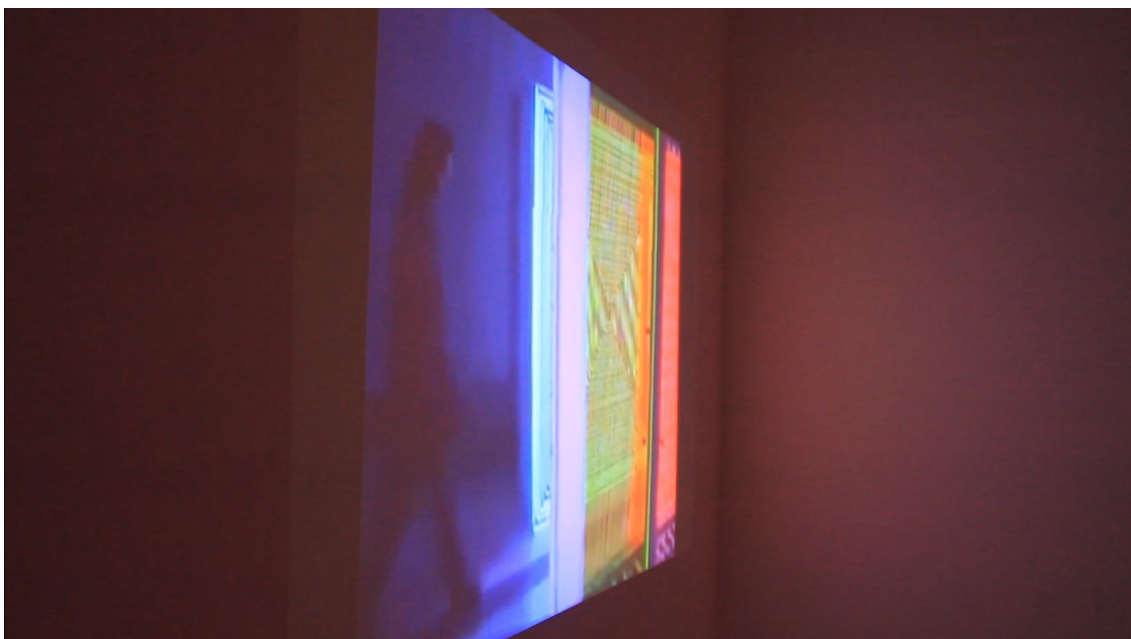


Fig. 93. Vasiliki Christouli, *After Central Corridor 2003*, 2017, 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London, video projection, dimensions variable

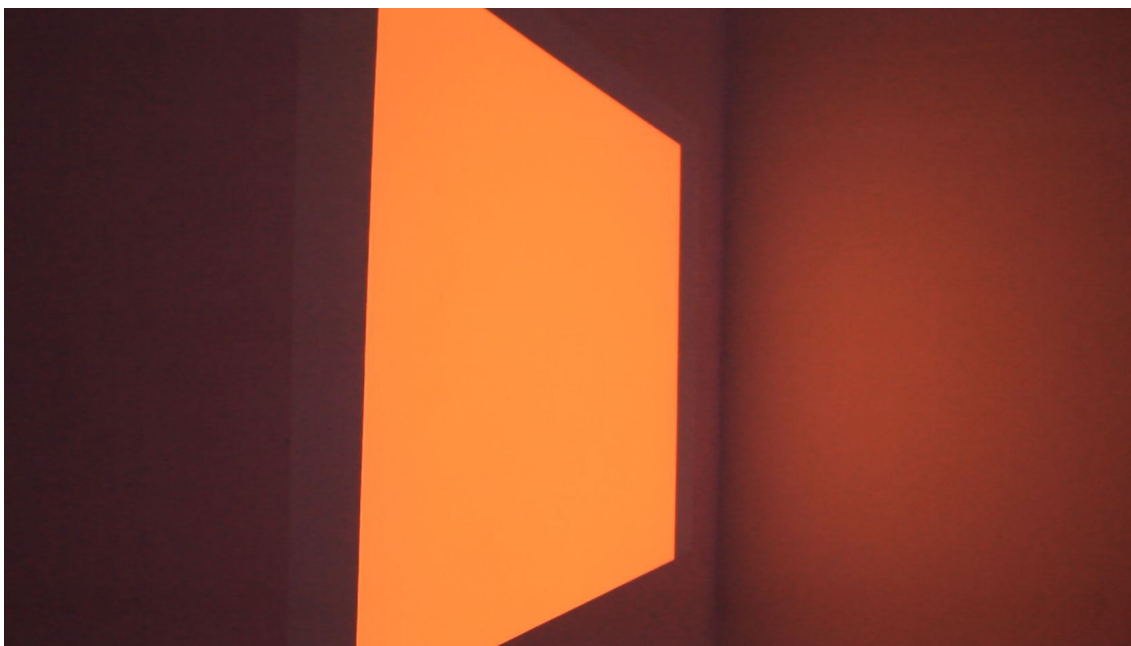


Fig. 94

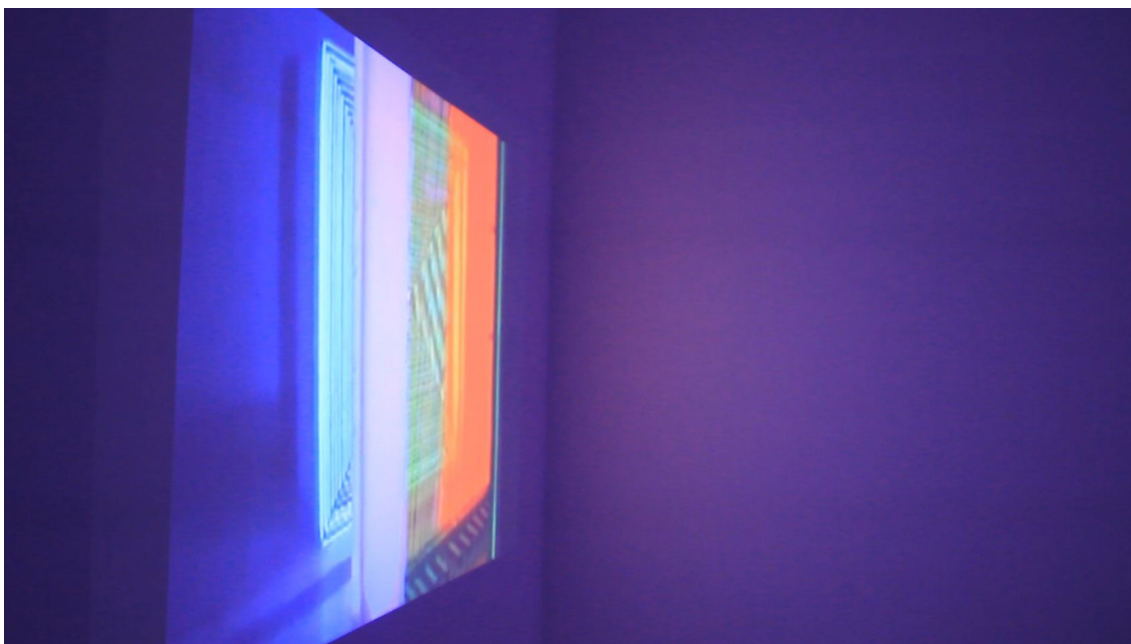


Fig. 95

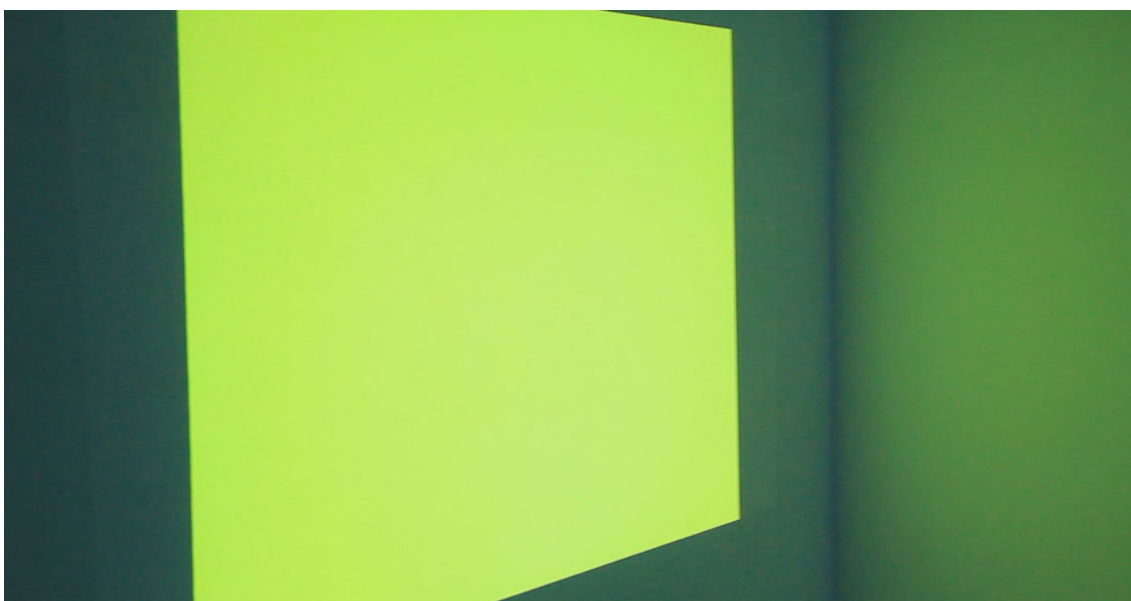


Fig. 96

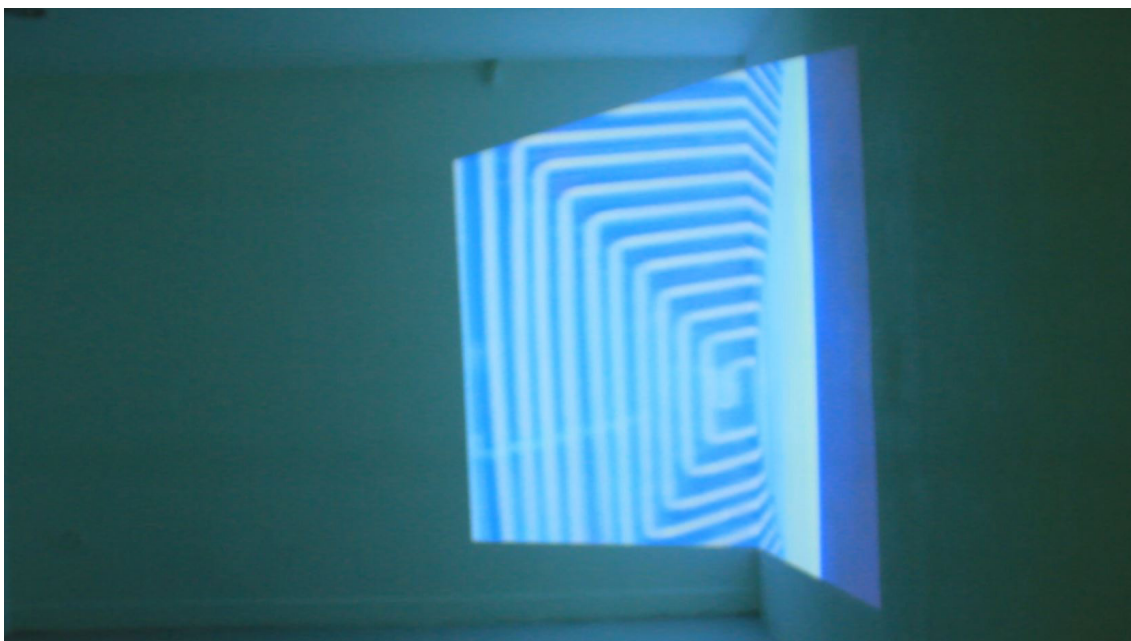


Fig. 97



Fig. 98



Fig. 99

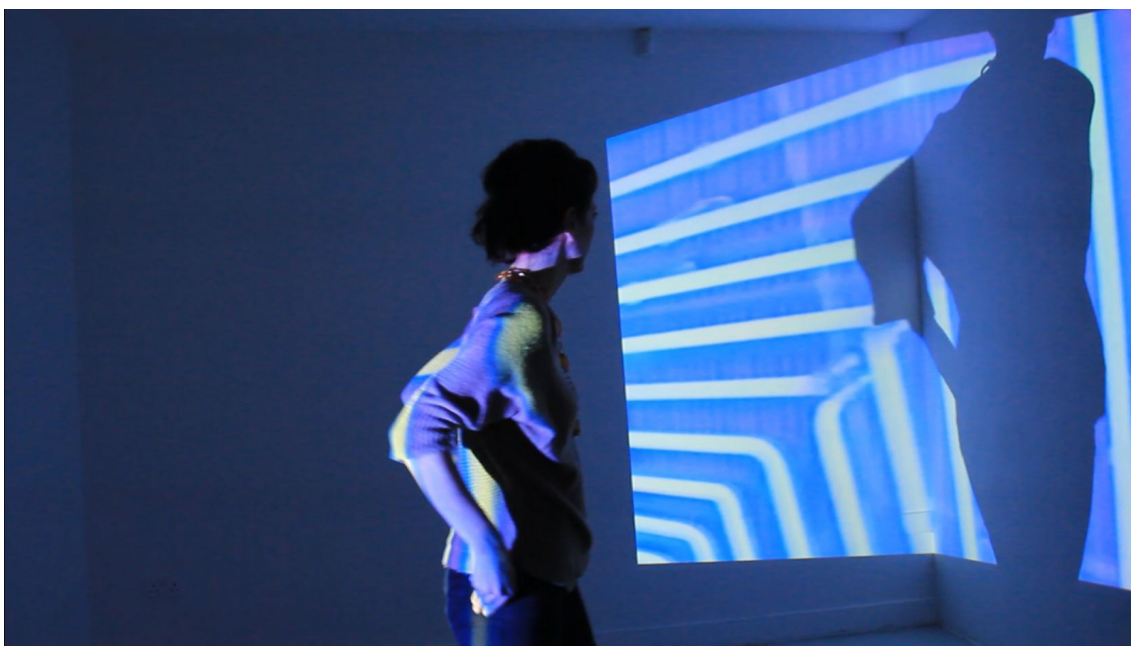


Fig. 100

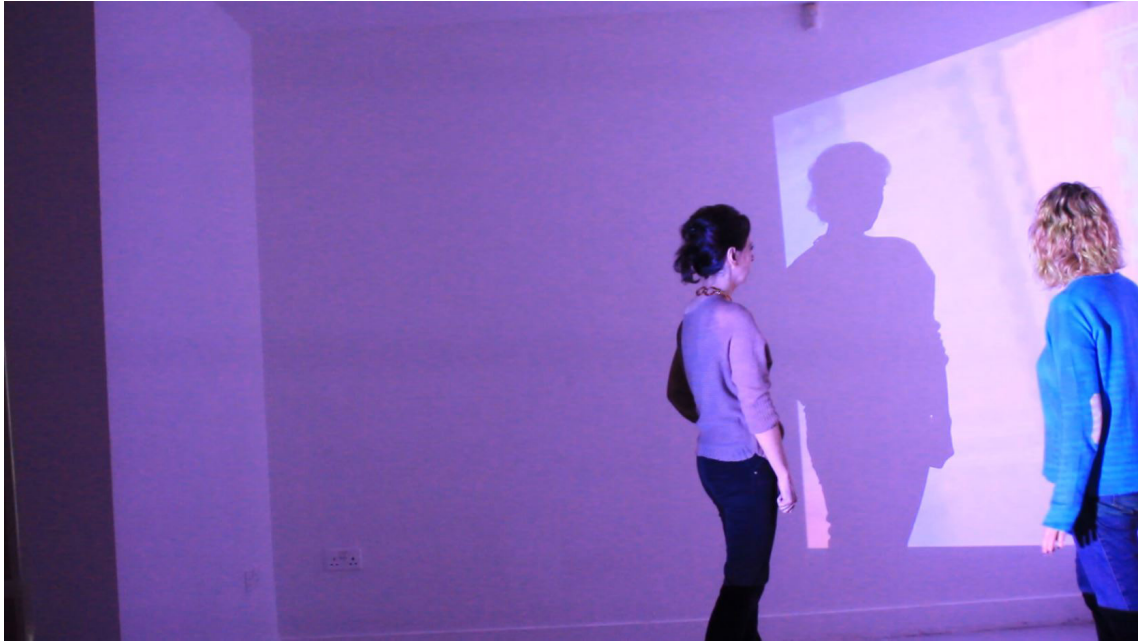


Fig. 101



Fig. 102



Fig. 103

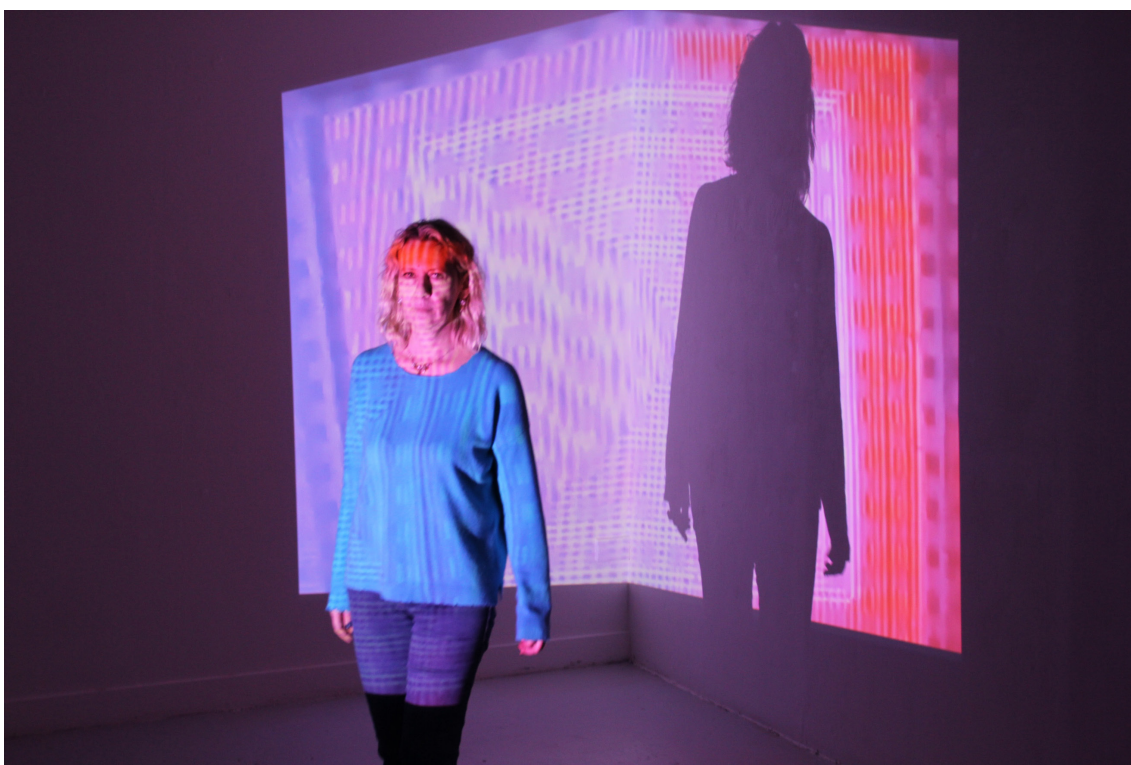


Fig. 104



Fig. 105. Vasiliki Christouli, *After In Site Compression 2007, 2017*, 'The Cookhouse', Chelsea College of Arts, London, video projection, dimensions variable

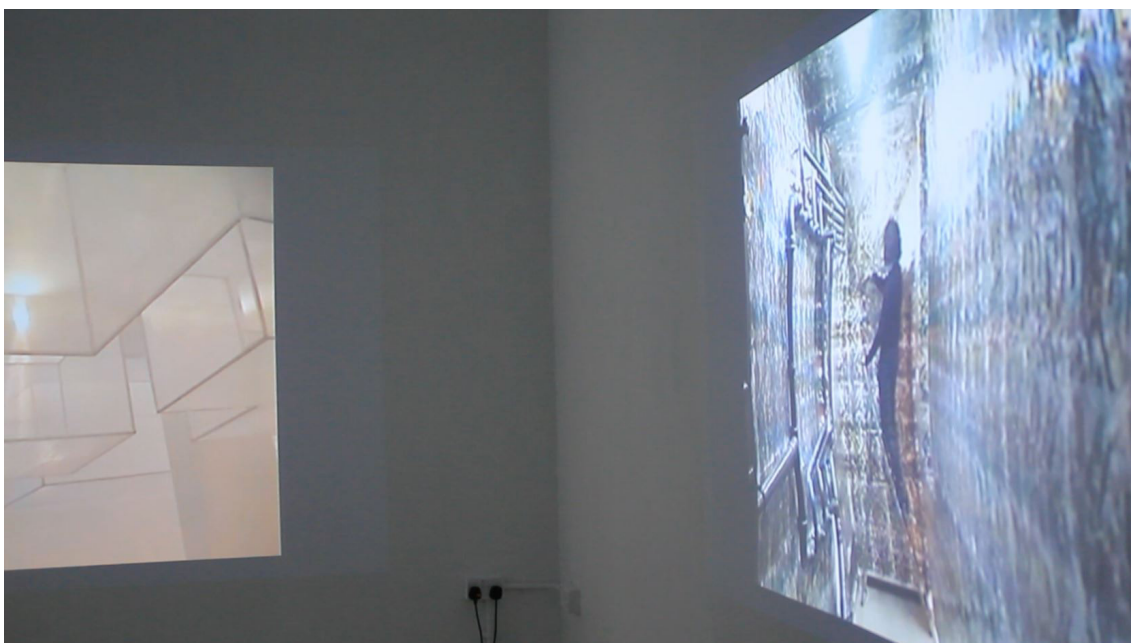


Fig. 106



Fig. 107



Fig. 108

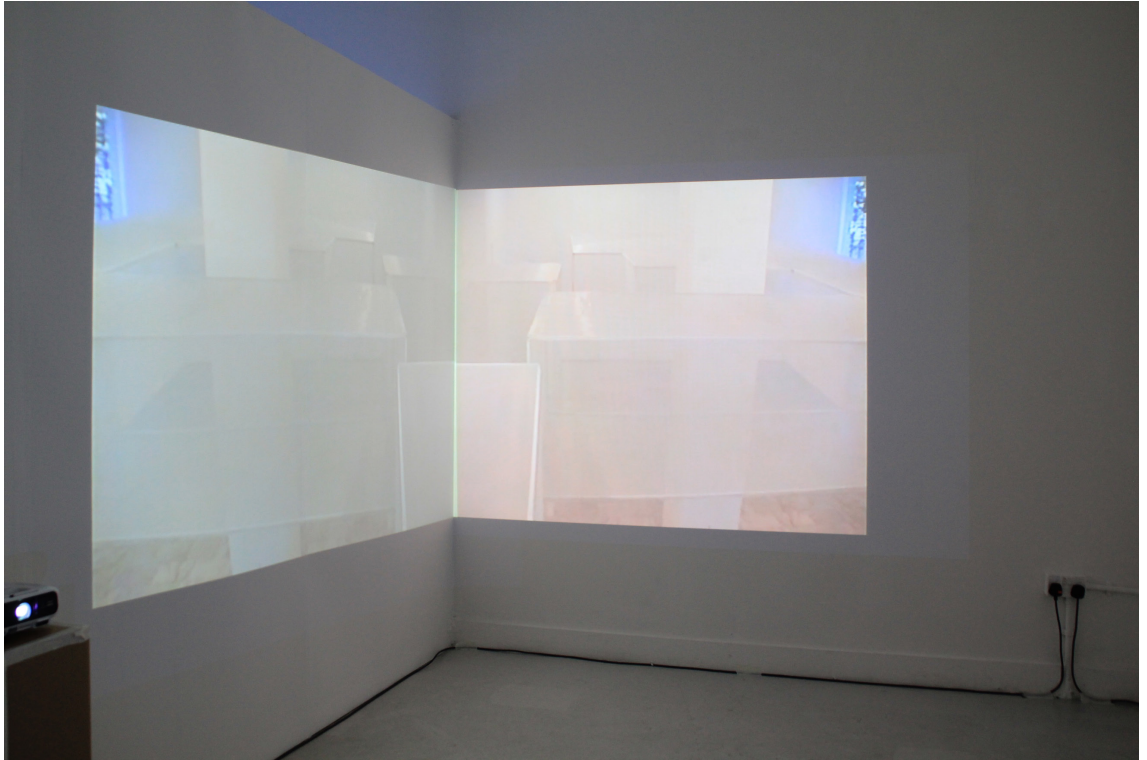


Fig. 109



Fig. 110

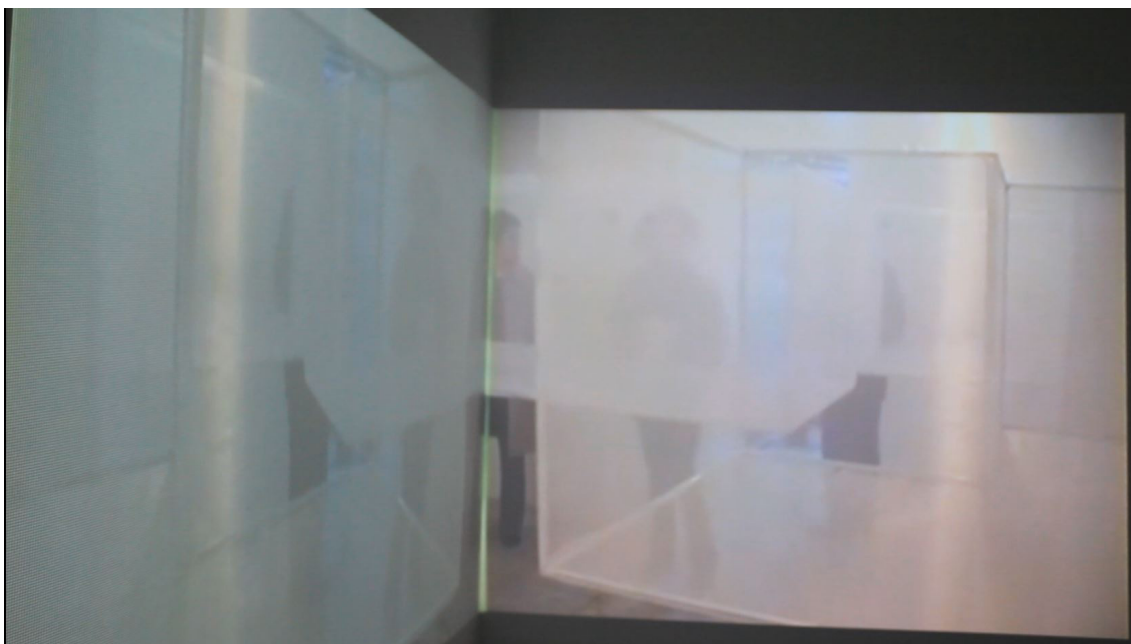


Fig. 111

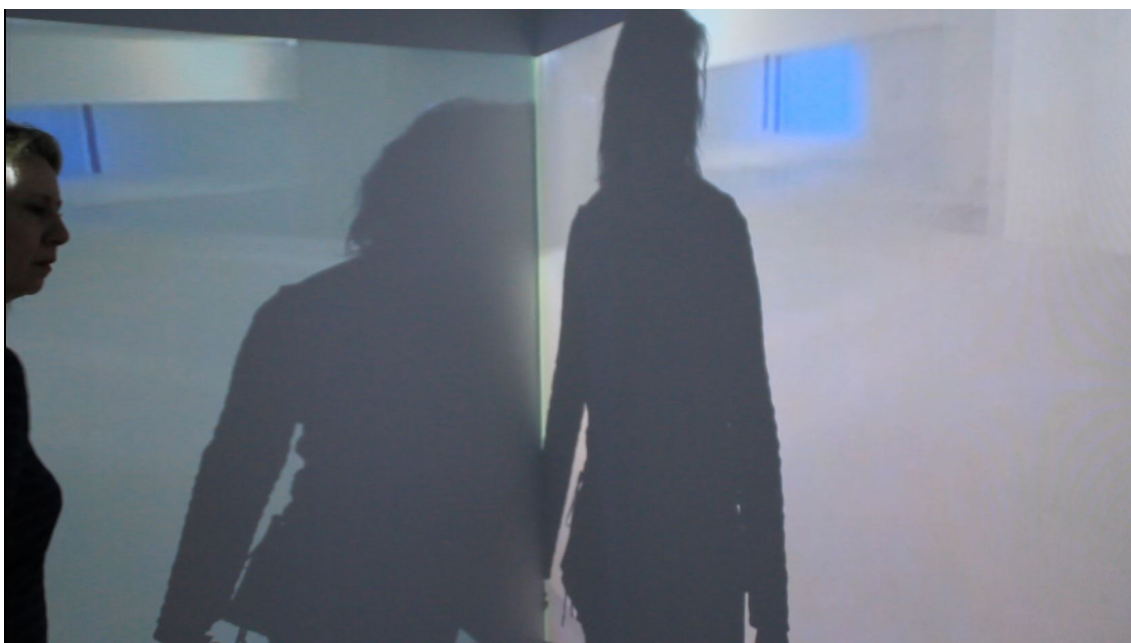


Fig. 112

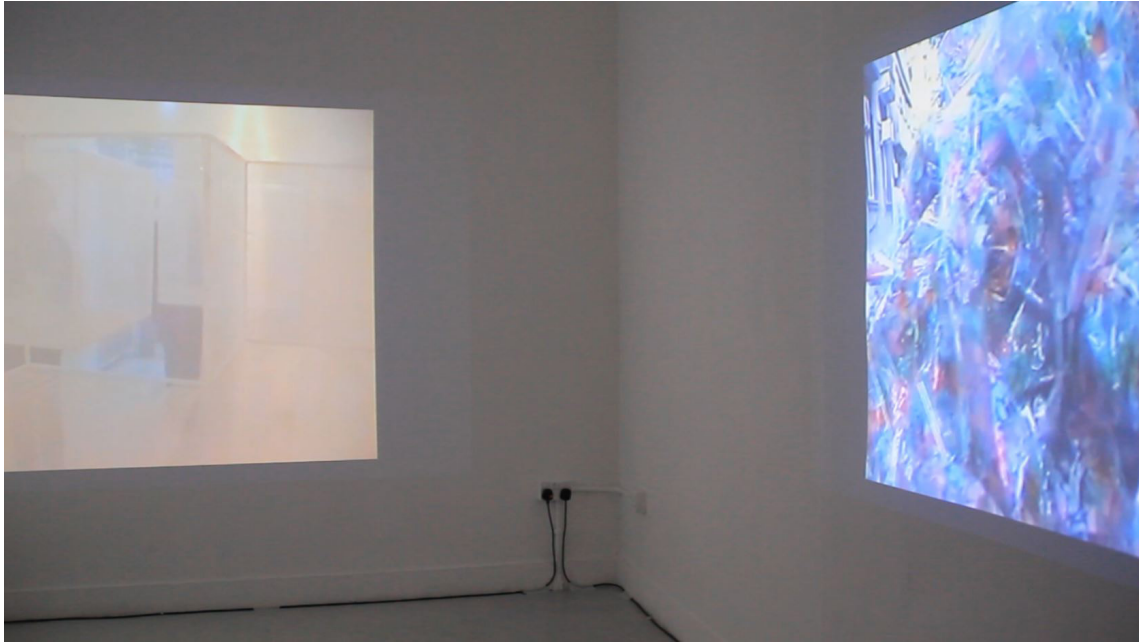


Fig. 113



Fig. 114

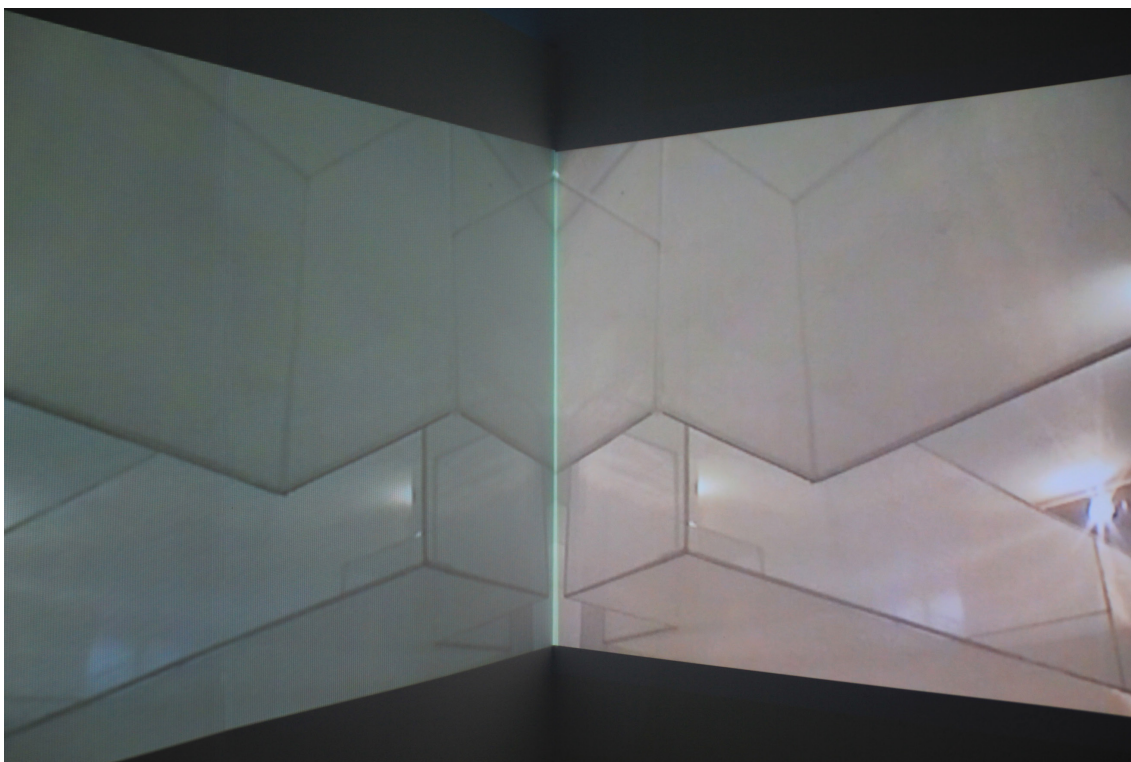


Fig. 115



Fig. 116

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## Appendix

## Βιβέττα Χριστούλη

### Πρόταση για προσωρινή εγκατάσταση γλυπτού έργου στο κέντρο της Αθήνας

Το έργο θα αποτελείται από κατακόρυφες επίπεδες διαφανείς επιφάνειες (150x200εκ. περίπου) από πλεξγκλάς, που εναλλάσσονται με αδιαφανείς επιφάνειες, σε συγκεκριμένη διάταξη. Η όλη κατασκευή στηρίζεται από μεταλλικά στοιχεία (αλουμίνιο). Σημαντικό στοιχείο είναι η ύπαρξη φωτισμού νέον σε κομβικές θέσεις μέσα στο έργο. Το τελικό σχέδιο και οι διαστάσεις του έργου θα εξαρτηθούν από το χώρο στον οποίο θα εγκατασταθεί το έργο.  
(Ενδεικτικά, ακολουθούν εικόνες από προηγούμενα έργα μου.)

Η καθαρότητα και ακρίβεια του σχεδίου του έργου προκαλεί μία σχέση αντιπαράθεσης του έργου με τον τόπο που θα τοποθετηθεί το έργο και τα διαφορετικά στοιχεία που τον χαρακτηρίζουν, τόσο τα μόνιμα: όγκοι πολυκατοικιών, δρόμοι, στάσεις λεωφορείων, κολώνες φωτισμού, σόρματα ΔΕΗ, δέντρα, όσο και τα τυχαία και προσωρινά: περαστικά αυτοκίνητα και πεζοί, κάδοι απορριμμάτων, σκουπίδια κ.λ.π.

Ο πραγματικός χώρος, ενσωματώνεται στο πεδίο αντίληψης του έργου. Ο θεατής υποχρεούται να συνειδητοποιήσει την αντιπαράθεση της διαφορετικής φύσης των δύο χώρων : του πραγματικού και αυτού που προτείνει το έργο.

Το έργο δεν συμμορφώνεται με τον υπάρχον χώρο. Αντίθετα υπάρχει ανταγωνιστικά προς αυτόν αφού εμποδίζει την αβίαστη διάβαση σε αυτόν και προτείνει ένα νέο τρόπο περιήγησης, εξερεύνησης και τελικά αντίληψης αυτού. Έτσι επιτυγχάνεται μια αβίαστη μη-σχέση του έργου με τον τόπο.

Η κίνηση του έργου όπως προκαλείται από την κίνηση του θεατή, οι πολλαπλές εικόνες, η περίεργη αίσθηση του χρωματιστού φωτός (νέον) που περιορίζεται σε συγκεκριμένους σχηματισμούς, η παρουσία των σκιών και των αντανακλάσεων, ενισχύουν τις αντιθέσεις μέσα-έξω και περιορισμός, απομόνωση- απελευθέρωση. Καθώς αλλάζει η θέση του θεατή, αλλάζει και η σχέση: αντικείμενο- περιεχόμενο- θεατής. Έτσι, ο θεατής, γίνεται κατά κάποιον τρόπο, μέρος του θέματος του έργου.

Για την λειτουργία του έργου χρειάζεται παροχή ηλεκτρικού ρεύματος (για την λειτουργία του νέον), και σχετικά επίπεδη επιφάνεια διαπέδου για να τοποθετηθεί (τσιμέντο, ασφαλτός, μάρμαρο, κ.λ.π.).

Το συνολικό κόστος κατασκευής του ανέρχεται στα 7000 ΕΥΡΩ περίπου.

## Proposal for an ephemeral work of art in the centre of Athens (translation extracts)

The installation is composed of metal frames, Plexiglas panels 150 x 200 cm each, and neon lights. The final dimensions and design will depend on the space where it is located.

The accuracy of the final design of the work is intended to be contradictory to the location in which it is installed. This contradiction is concerned with both the permanent elements that characterise the location (buildings, bus stations, street lamps, trees, etc.) and the temporary ones (cars, pedestrians, garbage bins etc.). The viewer is challenged to experience the confrontation of both the real space and that proposed by the installation.

The work's presence has to be in contradiction with the nature of the space it occupies, i.e. to be positioned in a way that almost impedes the natural path, thus achieving a precise and unrelieved non-relation to the site and forcing the beholder to deal with the interposition of different types of space.

The movement of the viewer around the work's components causes an optical game of illusory movements on the part of the neon lights and their reflections, which enforces the contradictions of inside/outside, isolation/liberation. The viewer's changing positions therefore transform the relationship of object/context/viewer, and the viewer becomes, in a way, the subject of the work.

ΣΥΜΒΑΣΗ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΈΡΓΟΥ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΚΘΕΣΗ «ΑΘΗΝΑ BY ART»  
Στην Αθήνα, σήμερα Τετάρτη την 30.12.2004.....  
μεταξύ:

■ ΑΘΕΝΟΣ, του συμβατικού μη κερδοσκοπικού σωματίου με την επωνυμία ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΤΜΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΔΙΕΘΝΟΥΣ ΕΝΩΣΗΣ ΚΡΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ AICA ΕΛΛΑΣ (Association Internationale des Critiques d' Art - Section Hellénique), που εδρεύει στην Αθήνα (οδός Πατισσαριωπούλου 2<sup>η</sup> και λειτουργεί ως νόμιμο από την Πρόεδρο αυτού και Έφη Σπυριόγκα και τον Γενικό Γραμματέα αυτού κ. Νίκο Σιάδωκη, σύμφωνα με την από 21 Φεβρουαρίου 2003 απόφαση του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου του, το οποίο στην συνέχεια θα καλείται για συντομία «η AICA», και

■ ΑΘΕΤΤΡΟΥ, η Βασιλική Χριστούλη, μέτοχος της οδού Ελευθέρων 6, Τ.Κ. 145 64 (ΑΦΜ 922556113), η οποία στην συνέχεια θα καλείται για συντομία «ο Καλλιτέχνης»

συμφωνήθηκαν και έγιναν από κοινού αποδεκτά τα ακόλουθα:

Στο πλαίσιο της διοργάνωσης των Ολομαζικών Αγώνων ο «Πολιτιστικός Οργανισμός Δήμου Αθηναίων», ο οποίος στην συνέχεια θα καλείται για συντομία «ο ΔΙΟΡΓΑΝΩΤΗΣ», πρόκειται να πραγματοποιήσει σε συνεργασία με την «AICA» εκθετικό πρόγραμμα με τίτλο «ΑΘΗΝΑ BY ART», η οποία στην συνέχεια θα καλείται για συντομία «η Έκθεση» και η οποία αφορά την παρουσίαση εκθετικών έργων Ελλήνων καλλιτεχνών σε δημόσιους χώρους της Αθήνας.

Με την από Α.Π. 4662/270704 σύμβαση ο «ΔΙΟΡΓΑΝΩΤΗΣ» ανέλαβε και η «AICA» ανέλαβε την επιμέλεια του σχεδιασμού, καθώς και την υλοποίηση της «Έκθεσης» με τους όρους και συμφωνίες που ορίζονται σ' αυτήν.

### Άρθρο 1 Αντικείμενο της Σύμβασης

1.1. Η AICA ανατίθεται στον Καλλιτέχνη και αυτού αναλαμβάνει να δημιουργήσει/υλοτεγήσει/προσφέρει Έργο με τίτλο «Έτσι Παρόμοια θα δώ», 2004, ειδικά για την Έκθεση «ΑΘΗΝΑ BY ART», στον χώρο της πλατείας Δημοκρατίας και ειδικότερα στο σημείο που θα του υποδείξει η AICA, με βάση τα σχέδια που της έχει παραδώσει και τα οποία έχουν



a i c a / o / l a s



a i c a / o / l a s

### ΤΑ ΣΥΜΒΑΛΛΟΜΕΝΑ ΜΕΡΗ

Για την AICA

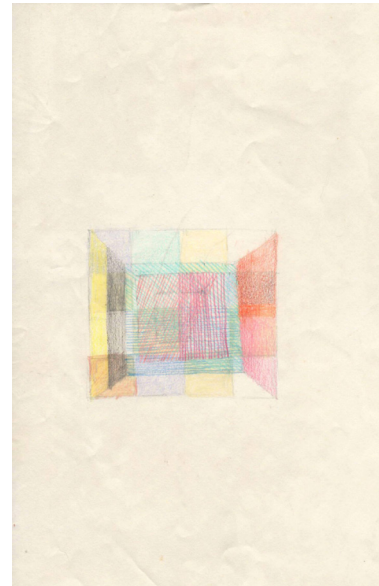
Πρόεδρος Δ.Σ.  
Έφη Σπυριόγκα

Γενικός Γραμματέας  
Νίκος Σιάδωκης

Ο ΚΑΛΛΙΤΕΧΝΗΣ

Βασιλική Χριστούλη

B. Christoulis



#### Χριστούλη Βιβέττα

##### Προσωπική Σημείωση

Πίνακες ζωγραφικής: ακίνητα, ήσυχα αντικείμενα . Ξαφνικά η ησυχία διασπάται. Η ζωγραφική επιφάνεια καλύπτεται από γεωμετρικά σχήματα σε έντονους χρωματισμούς που χτίζονται από γραμμές και εισχωρούν το ένα στο άλλο. Η διαδοχική χρήση συμπληρωματικών χρωμάτων, δημιουργεί ένα μάλλον ενοχλητικό εφέ.

Η προσέγγιση του πίνακα γίνεται όμοια με το πλησίασμα ενός ζωντανού όντος. Οι εικόνες ενεργοποιούνται από τον θεατή και απαντούν σε αυτόν. Οι πίνακες δεν υποδέχονται το βλέμμα αλλά καθορίζουν και συγκεκριμενοποιούν την όραση. Το *αληθινό*, το ίδιο το χρώμα, αντανακλάται στην *ψευδαίσθηση*, που προκαλείται από την χρήση αυτού.

Εικόνες πολυσετακές. Δεν πρόκειται όμως για ένα μη εστιασμένο χώρο. Η αδυναμία του να εστιάσεις σε ένα μόνο σημείο είναι χαρακτηριστικό του καιρού μας. Η αλήθεια έπαψε να είναι ορισμένη, οπότε τα πάντα είναι αβέβαια αλλά και ανοιχτά σε διάφορες ερμηνείες.

Στα έργα από πλεξίγκλάς ο πραγματικός χώρος, ενσωματώνεται στο πεδίο αντίληψης του κάθε έργου. Ο θεατής υποχρεούται να συνειδητοποιήσει την αντιπαράθεση της διαφορετικής φύσης των δύο χώρων : του πραγματικού και αυτού που προτείνει το έργο.

Ωστόσο το έργο δεν συμμορφώνεται με τον υπάρχον χώρο. Αντίθετα υπάρχει ανταγωνιστικά προς αυτόν αφού εμποδίζει την αβίαστη διάβαση σε αυτόν και προτείνει ένα νέο τρόπο περιδιάβασης , εξερεύνησης και τελικά αντίληψης αυτού. Έτσι επιτυγχάνεται μια αβίαστη *μη-σχέση* του έργου με τον τόπο.

Κάθε έργο θα μπορούσε να χαρακτηριστεί ως η *πρόταση μιας κατάστασης*, παρά ως μία *εγκατάσταση*. Όλο το σώμα συμμετέχει και ευθύνεται για την συνολική εντύπωση που προκαλεί το έργο.

Η κίνηση του έργου όπως προκαλείται από την κίνηση του θεατή, οι πολλαπλές εικόνες, η περιέργη αίσθηση του χρώματος (ή χρωματιστού φωτός :νέον) που περιορίζεται σε συγκεκριμένους σχηματισμούς, η παρουσία των σκιών και των αντανακλάσεων, ενισχύουν τις αντιθέσεις μέσα-έξω και περιορισμός, απομόνωση- απελευθέρωση. Καθώς αλλάζει η θέση του θεατή, αλλάζει και η σχέση: αντικείμενο- περιεχόμενο- θεατής. Έτσι ο θεατής, γίνεται κατά κάποιο τρόπο, μέρος του θέματος του έργου.

#### Model of the Sarandopoulos Mills building with that of the installation *Central Corridor* (2003), and translated extracts from the artist's proposal for the installation

The work rests immobile and quiet. This quiet is suddenly interrupted. The painterly surfaces are covered with lines of alternate complementary colours, which in their combination create a slightly annoying effect and subvert the 'beauty' of the image.

Moving closer to the work is like getting closer to a living creature, creating optical effects that give the impression that the work itself is moving...

Rather than an installation, the work is a proposal for a situation, and depends on the viewer's entire body for its perception.

My aim is to engage the spectator's consciousness with the work's own internal set of relationships. Whatever relationship is perceived is contingent on the viewer's temporal movement in the space shared with the work.



Ζαλοκόστα, 7 (106.71) ΑΘΗΝΑ Τηλ.– Fax: 0103612050 / email: gallery7athens@yahoo.gr

## Δ Ε Λ Τ Ι Ο Τ Υ Π Ο Υ

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Την Τρίτη 7 Νοεμβρίου η γκαλερί «7» παρουσιάζει την καινούργια δουλειά της  
BIBETTA ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΛΗ με τίτλο < Συμπύκνωση Επί Τόπου > .

Το έργο αποτελείται από δυο εγκαταστάσεις σχεδιασμένες ειδικά για τον  
συγκεκριμένο χώρο ( site –specific).

Η πρώτη απλώνεται στον διάδρομο που οδηγεί στον κυρίως χώρο της γκαλερί 7.  
Ο τοίχος και το ταβάνι επενδύονται με χαλκομανίες με μοτίφ που διακοσμούσαν την  
δεκαετία του '70, πλαστικά σκεύη.  
Η ανοίκεια εικόνα που προκαλείται από την αλλαγή της λειτουργίας του διαδρόμου  
από χώρο μετάβασης, σε εφήμερο έργο, ενισχύεται από το γεγονός ότι έχει  
μετατραπεί σε έναν χώρο ακόμα πιο κλειστοφοβικό και αφιλόξενο. Ο επισκέπτης  
καλείται να σταθεί στον χώρο *ανάμεσα* στις επιφάνειες που απαρτίζουν το έργο.

Στην κυρίως αίθουσα, το έργο κατασκευασμένο από διαφανές πανί, 'ίπταται' στον  
χώρο του οποίου αποτελεί την συμπύκνωση. Είναι το φάντασμα του εσωτερικού της  
γκαλερί ή αλλιώς το *θετικό* του *αρνητικού* της αίθουσας. Ταυτόχρονα είναι το *κουτί*  
του χώρου που περικλείεται από το έργο.  
Καταλαμβάνοντας τον χώρο που συνήθως καταλαμβάνεται από θεατές, το έργο  
θέτει τον επισκέπτη *ανάμεσα* στον πραγματικό χώρο και στην παραμόρφωσή του.  
Κινοούμενος γύρω από το έργο ο θεατής αντιλαμβάνεται την ίδια την δική του φυσική  
*παρουσία*, σε αντίθεση με την αίσθηση *απουσίας* που δημιουργείται σαν ηχώ σε κάθε  
κενό χώρο.

Σαν παρωδία του 'μνημειακού' έργου τέχνης, το έργο τελικά θυμίζει τοπίο.

Γεννήθηκε στην Αθήνα το 1966.

Σπούδασε Ζωγραφική στην Α.Σ.Κ.Τ.(1992-1997).

Το 1994 φοίτησε στην Βασιλική Ακαδημία Χάγης στην Ολλανδία (ERASMUS).

Το 1999 απέκτησε μεταπτυχιακό τίτλο σπουδών Master of Arts (Studio Art- Environmental  
Art) από το New York University στη Νέα Υόρκη (Υποτροφία Μπάκαλα)

Από το 2005 είναι υποψήφια Διδάκτωρ στο University of the Arts London, Camberwell

College of Arts, Λονδίνο (Χρονικοί και Χωρικοί Περιορισμοί στην Site-Specific Art)

Είναι κάτοχος πτυχίου Φαρμακευτικής από το Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο

Αθηνών (1992).

Ζει και εργάζεται στην Αθήνα.

### Ατομικές εκθέσεις

2006 *Συμπύκνωση Επί Τόπου*, Γκαλερί 7, Αθήνα

2004 *Εστία Παράθυρα δια Δύο*, Πλατεία Δημοπρατηρίου, Αθήνα

2004 *Γραμμική επιτάχυνση ή Βάλε τους πίνακες στην θέση τους*, Γκαλερί 7, Αθήνα

2003 *Κεντρικός Διάδρομος*, Κυλινδρόμυλοι Σαραντόπουλου, Αθήνα

2002 *4x3 Επιπλέον Χώρος*, 365 Art Project, Αθήνα.

1999 *MA Thesis Exhibition*, 80 Washington Square East Galleries, Νέα  
Υόρκη

### Ομαδικές εκθέσεις(επιλογή)

2006 - *Σχεδόν Φώς*, Αλεκτον, Αθήνα, Επιμέλεια Λίνα Τσίκουτα

2005 - *Νέα Αποκτίσματα του Δήμου Αθηναίων*, Δημοτική Πνακοθήκη, Αθήνα

2004 - *Πώς Μοιάζει η Απειλή*, Κουρσούμ Τζαμί, Τρίκαλα

- *ΑΘΗΝΑ By Art*, Εικαστικές παρεμβάσεις στο κέντρο της Αθήνας, Πολιτιστική  
Ολυμπιάδα, Συνδιοργάνωση AICA HELLAS και Δήμος Αθηναίων.

- *Εξή Γυναίκες. Εξή Προτάσεις*, 4η Διάσκεψη Υ.π. Αθλητισμού, Αστέρης, Αθήνα

- *Εν Αρχή ην το Παιρ*, Γκαλερί Γαργάννος, Αθήνα. Επιμέλεια Μπία  
Παπαδοπούλου

2003 - *Ephemeral Structures in the city of Athens*, Βυζαντινό Μουσείο, Αθήνα

- *Διαγράφοντας το Σήμερα, το Αύριο, το Χθες*, Τεχνόπολις Δήμου

Αθηναίων, Μακεδονικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης Θεσσαλονίκης

Επιμέλεια Λίνα Τσίκουτα

2002 - *Sotheby's International Young Art*, Νέα Υόρκη, Άμστερνταμ, Τελ. Αβιβ

- *Διαγράφοντας το σήμερα, το αύριο, το χθες*, Πνακοθήκη Αβέρωφ,

Μέτσοβο, Επιμέλεια Λίνα Τσίκουτα

- *Αναζητώντας την Ολυμπιακή Ιδέα*, Πνακοθήκη του Δήμου Αθηναίων

2000 - *Πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο*, Κωνσταντινούπολη

- *Forum για τον Πολιτισμό και την Ειρήνη*, Κάστρο Ιπποτών, Ρόδος

- *Eco Festival 2000*, Εθνικός Κήπος

1994 - *Heineken Art 94*, Πολιτιστικό Κέντρο Μελίνα Μερκούρη, Αθήνα

### **In Site Compression, Press Release** (translation of the proposal for the installation)

The work constitutes a site-specific installation and is composed of two parts.

The corridor part of the installation (before the main room of Gallery 7) consists of printed PP sheets that unfold on the ceiling and walls. The transformation of the corridor from transitional space to temporal installation causes the viewer to feel a strange sense of enclosure, which is reinforced by their own movements.

In the main gallery, the sculptural forms structured by transparent cloth seem to float in the air. These structures constitute both the *negative* form of the room and the *box* that contains its emptiness. The work positions the beholder between the real space and its distortion. Moving around the work's components, viewers experience their physical *presence* as being in contrast to the feeling of *absence* that is consistent with every *empty* space.

Finally, the installation brings to mind a kind of landscape, in a parody of its 'monumentality'.

ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΙΚΟΣ ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ

# ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ART

ΑΙΣΑ ΕΛΛΑΣ ΕΝΟΣΗ ΚΡΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ

Το έργο μας γραμμές σε φάρμα μανδύου, με υλικά το διάφανο πλεξιγκλάς, τους χρωματιστούς μπλε σωλήνες νέον και το πράσινο χρώμα δημιουργεί χώρους, παράθυρα, οπτικές ελπίδες, διαστάσεις. Συνολικά δημιουργούνται έξι χώροι, εσωτερικές ελπίδες και επτά διάφανα παράθυρα παρατηρητέα στη σειρά και διαγώνια (έξω και ο τίτλος από μπλε καθίστους σωλήνες νέον, το έργο διαστάσεων ύψους 2,10μ, βάθους 1,85μ και συνολικού μήκους 5,40μ, δημιουργεί έξι χώρους, πλάτους 0,90μ., επεκτείνοντας στο εσωτερικό τους. Από τις δύο πλευρές πλευρές, μέσω των διαδοχικών παραθύρων, εισάγει το θεατή στη μαγεία της γεωμετρικότητας, των αερίων γραμμών και, μέσω των επαναλαμβανόμενων μονάδων και της καθαρής επίδρασης του φωτός, τον παραδίδει στην ψευδοαίσθητική ανάπτυξη, τον πολυπλοκότητα των ειδώλων, των αντανακλάσεων και του τονικού της προοπτικής.

Προηγούμενες δημιουργίες αντίστοιχης λογικής είναι το έργο της έκθεσης διαγράμματος το Σάββατο, το Αίριο και το Άσος στην Πανοικία Ε. Αβέρωφ του Μετσόβου, το 2002, ο Κεντρικός Διάδρομος, το 2003, στους Κολοδράμους Σαρανταπόρου ή το Χωρίς τίτλο της στοάς της με τίτλο Γραμμή επιτάχυνση ή βλεπόμενος στην θέση τους στην Γκαλερί 67, το 2004.

Η καλλιτέχνης συχνά υπονοείται, «διερωτάται», εμποδίζει τη διέλευση στο χώρο, απομακρύνεται στις υπάρχουσες δομές του, τον μετατρέποντας, όπως καταγράφει, για την παρούσα έκθεση, να εντοπιστούν την πλατεια Δημοκρατίας επί της οδού Μητροπόλεως, προκάλυπτας τη συμμετοχή του θεατή.

Για άλλη μια φορά διερευνά τα φαινόμενα, αναζητεί τις δομικές αλληλουχίες του χώρου και του χρόνου-μέσω της επίδρασης της παύσης του θεατή- του φανταστικού και του είναι. Για άλλη μια φορά μας εισάγει στους χώρους της φαινομενολογίας, ένα διερευνά φαινόμενα ως ανεξάρτητα βιώματα. Προωθεί την αντίληψη του έργου σε απόλυτη συνάρτηση με το χρόνο και το χώρο, το τυχαίο αλλά και το απόλυτο προσδιορισμένο.

Το έργο ορίζεται ταυτόχρονα ως ιδέα, ως αντικείμενο-κατασκευή, αλλά και ως γεγονός, μιας κι εξαρτάται από το χρόνο, το φως και τη θέση του θεατή. Στο έργο αυτό παίζει η ρήση της Bridget Riley: «Η φύση δεν είναι τα τοπία, αλλά ο δυναμισμός των οπτικών δυνάμεων, περισσότερο ένα γεγονός παρά μια όψη».

Αννα Τσικουρά

Έργο παράθυρα διαστάσεων 2,10x3,40x1,85μ.  
Πλατεια Δημοκρατίας

Through a meander pattern in plexiglas, blue neon tubes, and green paint Vivetta Christouli created spaces, windows, and optical illusions. A row of six alternating recessed and protruding spaces and seven transparent windows were bisected (hence the title) by vertical blue neon tubes. The piece, which was 2.10m high, 1.85m deep with an overall length of 5.40m, comprised six spaces, 0.90m wide, that could be inspected on the inside. The viewer entered either end, and through a succession of windows was introduced to the magic of geometry and serial lines and, through the repeated units and lighting effects, was delivered into an illusionary unfolding of multiple images, reflections and perspectives.

Similar works by Christouli have been seen in the group exhibitions, *Sketching Today, Tomorrow and Yesterday* (E. Averof Gallery, Metsovo 2002), *Central Corridor* (Sarakatsopoulos Mills, Athens 2003) and the work *Untitled* in her recent solo show, *Linear acceleration or put the paintings in their place* at Gallery 7 in Athens. She often undermines, "corrects," or hinders the entrance to the space. She juxtaposes its existing structures, transforming it, and managing, as she did in *Athens by Art*, to activate Dimopatriou Square on Mitropoleos Street by inviting the viewer's participation.

Once again Christouli traced the structural sequences of time and space (through the route of the viewer) as well as appearance and existence. Again she introduced us to the realm of phenomenology, exploring phenomena as conscious experience. She promotes the perception of the work in an absolute cohesion with time and space, with chance, as well as with predetermination.

The work is defined as an idea, an object/construction, as well as an event, since it depends on time, light and the position of the viewer. Apt here is Bridget Riley's remark "Nature is not landscapes, but the dynamics of visual forces, more an event than a scene."

Lina Tsikouta

Seven Windows Divided by Two, 2004  
Installation of plexiglas, metal frame, neon rods, transformers  
2.10x3.40x1.85m  
Dimopatriou Square



Το ξετύλιγμα μιας γραμμής σε φόρμα μαιάνδρου, με υλικά το διάφανο πλεξιγκλάς, τους χρωματιστούς μπλε σωλήνες νέον και το πράσινο χρώμα δημιουργεί χώρους, παράθυρα, οπτικές ψευδαισθήσεις. Συνολικά δημιουργούνται έξι χώροι, εσοχές-εξοχές, και επτά διάφανα παράθυρα παρατεταγμένα στη σειρά και διχοτομημένα (εξού και ο τίτλος) από μπλε κάθετους σωλήνες νέον. Το έργο, διαστάσεων ύψους 2,10μ, βάθους 1,85μ. και συνολικού μήκους 5,40μ, δημιουργεί έξι χώρους, πλάτους 0,90μ., επισκέψιμους στο εσωτερικό τους. Από τις δύο πλάγιες πλευρές, μέσω των διαδοχικών παραθύρων, εισάγει το θεατή στη μαγεία της γεωμετρικότητας, των σειριακών γραμμών και, μέσω των επαναλαμβανόμενων μονάδων και της καθοριστικής επίδρασης του φωτός, τον παραδίδει στην ψευδαισθησιακή ανάπτυξη, τον πολλαπλασιασμό των ειδώλων, των αντανάκλασεων και του τονισμού της προοπτικής.

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Λίνα Τσίκουτα

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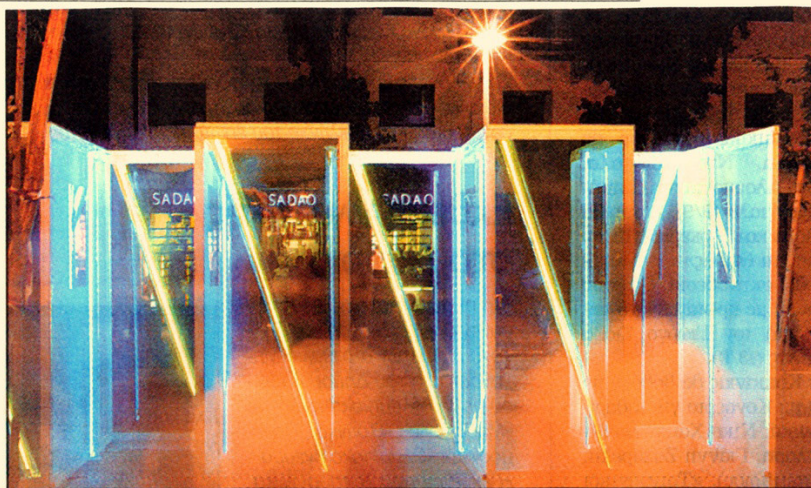
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Lina Tsikouta

Επτά παράθυρα διά δύο, 2004  
Εγκατάσταση, πλεξιγκλάς, μεταλλικός σκελετός, σωλήνες νέον, μετασχηματιστές  
2,10X5,40X1,85μ.  
Πλατεία Δημοπρατηρίου

Seven Windows Divided by Two, 2004  
Installation of plexiglas, metal frame, neon rods, transformers  
2.10X5.40X1.85m  
Dimopratirion Square



## Μια Μπιενάλε στους δρόμους

17

ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ

ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ 25 ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ 2004

**Μ**άτια ορθάνοιχτα – προς πάσα κατεύθυνση. Αισθήσεις, σε εγρήγορση. Διάθεση, σαφές, στατα εξερευνητική. Περιέργεια. Επιπλέον, όρεξη –και δυνάμεις– για ποδαρόδρομο. Πολύ ποδαρόδρομο, όμως –εν μέσω των πολύγλωσσων λαοθαλασσών. Είναι ό,τι χρειάζεσαι για να τα βγάλεις πέρα με τα δεκάδες έργα της Αθήνας by art και του «Αθήνα 2004», που έχουν κατακλύσει, τούτες τις ολυμπιακές ημέρες, την καρδιά της πόλης, στο ιστορικό κι εμπορικό κέντρο της Αθήνας.

Γιατί πώς αλλιώς θα διακρίνεις την τεράστια αράχνη (έργο της **Δήμητρας Σιατερλή**) που έχει απλώσει τους ιστούς της, πάνω από τους φωτεινούς σηματοδότες, Ευριπίδου και Αθηνάς γωνία; Ή το αιωρούμενο, πάνω ακριβώς από τα ανυποψίαστα κεφάλια μας, κουπί μαζί με το μαστίγιο, του **Διονύση Καβαλλιεράτου**, στην είσοδο, απ'το Μοναστηράκι, του Ψυρρή –«the heart of the city», όπως μας πληροφορούν με πανηγυρικό τρόπο διάσπαρτα πολύχρωμα σημαϊάκια;

Αν δεν είσαι «λαγωνικό», πιθανότατα θα την πατήσεις και με το παραπλανητικό έργο του **Γιώργου Γεωργακόπουλου**, «Τα πάνω κάτω», μπροστά από την είσοδο στο σταθμό «Μοναστηράκι». Ευτυχώς, υπάρχει ταμπελίτσα! Περνώντας μπροστά του θα ρεφίξεις πως πρόκειται για μία ακόμη απ' τις συνηθισμένες μεταλλικές εισδοχές εφημερίδων και εντύπων... «Και μετά σου λένε, τέχνη!», ήταν ο αφορισμός περαστικού, που έμεινε ενεός παρατηρώντας το.

Εκεί που αν δεν είσαι δεόντως παρατηρητικός θα σου ξεφύγουν κάμποσες «φωτεινές περιπτώσεις» και θα 'ναι πράγματι κρίμα, είναι λίγο πιο πάνω, στην πλατεία Δημοπρατηρίου, επί της Μητροπόλεως: τα πορτρέτα του Λιχτενστάιν, του Ντα Βιντσι και του Γκρέκο, του Βαν Γκογκ, μαζί με του Θεόφιλου και του Γουόρχολ (διά χειρός του καλλιτέχνη **Σταύρου Μπονάτσου**) εφάπτονται σαν παρακλάδια των κολονών με τις λάμπες που φωτίζουν το δρόμο. Πρέπει να σηκώσεις το κεφάλι σου ψηλά για να τα απολαύσεις. Στο ίδιο σημείο, ο κόσμος, μ' ένα σουβλάκι ανά χείρας, μπαينوβγαίνει στα «επτά παράθυρα διά δύο». Επτά ανοικτοί, έχεις την εντύπωση, τηλεφωνικοί θάλαμοι, με οιαδήποτε πρασινα και γαλάζια νέον (της **Βιβέτας Χριστούλη**).

Eleftherotypia 25/08/2004

Vivetta Christouli

Central Corridor





## «Phenomenological» Passage through lights

«Un travail sur les limites, les limites spatiales, mais aussi psychologiques».

Jean-Marc Bustamante [1]

Vivetta Christouli seems to have created her work «Central Corridor» for the purpose of ushering us into the spaces of phenomenology, to an investigation and study of the way in which external reality appears to a given person. She recommends we investigate phenomena as conscious experiences, without preconceived ideas. She even urges us to experience the space itself, discovering the truth by separating it from illusion and deception.

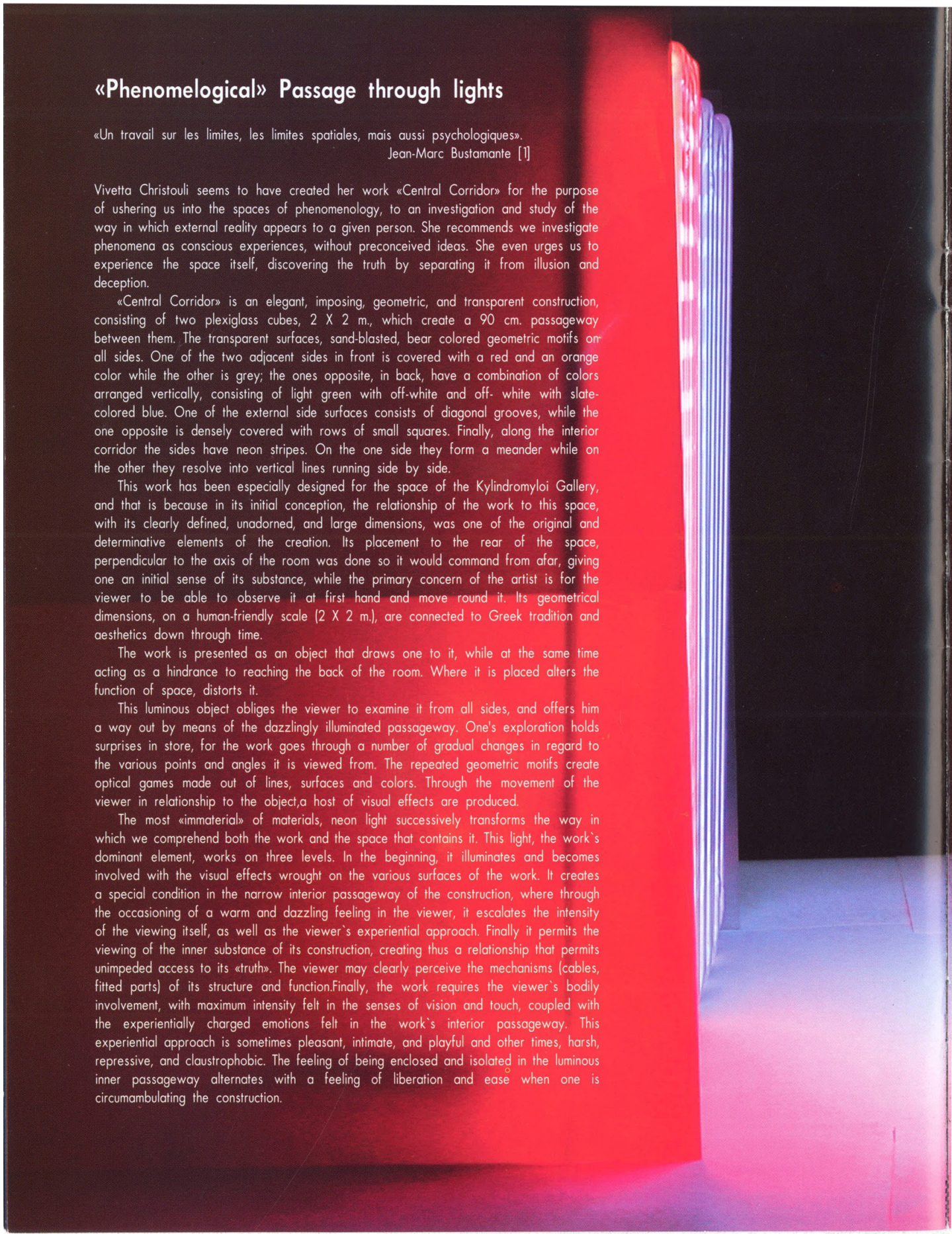
«Central Corridor» is an elegant, imposing, geometric, and transparent construction, consisting of two plexiglass cubes, 2 X 2 m., which create a 90 cm. passageway between them. The transparent surfaces, sand-blasted, bear colored geometric motifs on all sides. One of the two adjacent sides in front is covered with a red and an orange color while the other is grey; the ones opposite, in back, have a combination of colors arranged vertically, consisting of light green with off-white and off-white with slate-colored blue. One of the external side surfaces consists of diagonal grooves, while the one opposite is densely covered with rows of small squares. Finally, along the interior corridor the sides have neon stripes. On the one side they form a meander while on the other they resolve into vertical lines running side by side.


This work has been especially designed for the space of the Kyliindromyloi Gallery, and that is because in its initial conception, the relationship of the work to this space, with its clearly defined, unadorned, and large dimensions, was one of the original and determinative elements of the creation. Its placement to the rear of the space, perpendicular to the axis of the room was done so it would command from afar, giving one an initial sense of its substance, while the primary concern of the artist is for the viewer to be able to observe it at first hand and move round it. Its geometrical dimensions, on a human-friendly scale (2 X 2 m.), are connected to Greek tradition and aesthetics down through time.

The work is presented as an object that draws one to it, while at the same time acting as a hindrance to reaching the back of the room. Where it is placed alters the function of space, distorts it.

This luminous object obliges the viewer to examine it from all sides, and offers him a way out by means of the dazzlingly illuminated passageway. One's exploration holds surprises in store, for the work goes through a number of gradual changes in regard to the various points and angles it is viewed from. The repeated geometric motifs create optical games made out of lines, surfaces and colors. Through the movement of the viewer in relationship to the object, a host of visual effects are produced.

The most «immaterial» of materials, neon light successively transforms the way in which we comprehend both the work and the space that contains it. This light, the work's dominant element, works on three levels. In the beginning, it illuminates and becomes involved with the visual effects wrought on the various surfaces of the work. It creates a special condition in the narrow interior passageway of the construction, where through the occasioning of a warm and dazzling feeling in the viewer, it escalates the intensity of the viewing itself, as well as the viewer's experiential approach. Finally it permits the viewing of the inner substance of its construction, creating thus a relationship that permits unimpeded access to its «truth». The viewer may clearly perceive the mechanisms (cables, fitted parts) of its structure and function. Finally, the work requires the viewer's bodily involvement, with maximum intensity felt in the senses of vision and touch, coupled with the experientially charged emotions felt in the work's interior passageway. This experiential approach is sometimes pleasant, intimate, and playful and other times, harsh, repressive, and claustrophobic. The feeling of being enclosed and isolated in the luminous inner passageway alternates with a feeling of liberation and ease when one is circumambulating the construction.





The work constitutes a development of space, but it also introduces the sense of time, through motion, created by the gradual transformations and visual effects, which the moving viewer then experiences. The desired relationship of a reciprocal influence between the work and viewer, thus constitutes one of the dominant points involved in the conception and completion of the work.

Vivetta Christouli feels that «Central Corridor» is neither an installation nor an environment. Her intention is that work should not be comprehensible, at the first glance, in its entirety, and that any easy «familiarity» with it, in regard to its substance, is to be avoided. She herself would like the viewer to gradually «discover» the complex and antithetical components of the work. Nevertheless, for our part we must assert that the work does contain the main characteristics of both installations, (because it incorporates the exhibition space as an aesthetic component of the work), and environments, since the artist wants to incorporate the viewer into the aesthetic event, which she has constructed entirely on her own.

The work fits in with her previous pictorial endeavors, namely abstract geometric painting on plexiglass, with the sought after confusion, intervention and covering of the surfaces, then coupled with the chromatic motifs and the interruption of the continuity and harmony of the image. There is an aspiration to create a «hindrance» to the viewer's effortless passage which also involves transparency and the influence of light, motion and the transformation occasioned by means of this, the synergy created between truth and illusion; all these taken together constitute the main components of these recent aesthetic quests, consistently found developed in her pictorial creations.

The entire space, created by the work at Kyindromyloi, can be viewed in the context of Minimal Art, with its spare geometric forms, completely defined, and in a specific relationship with the space and the viewer; it is also a part of the geometric tradition, of Op Art in particular, with an emphasis placed in those visual games made up of lines, points, surfaces, and colors, and the production of visual effects. The interest of this work and its point of equilibrium are in the well-designed culmination of the intensity it gives rise to.

Christouli's favorite artists, such as Dan Flavin, Robert Irving, Richard Serra and Mark Rothko, constitute an assimilated offering to her creations, so carefully designed. Artists, such as Dan Flavin, and Bruce Nauman, as well as our own Chryssa, Antonakos and Bouteas, have been involved since the Sixties and Seventies with minimalist developments and have used neon in their works. One thing is certain, however: in terms of local production, Yannis Bouteas, at least historically speaking, is the one who has remained in our memories, both for his avant garde use of Luminial Art, with neon tubes, pure shapes, minimal elements and the exploration of the relationship of space and light source, and for his 19872 exhibition at the Hilton using plexiglass, neon and engraved compositions.

Vivetta Christouli, in her «Central Corridor» is on the trail of becoming and being, in a «motionless flow». She succeeds in this the game of illusion and deception, while at the same time exposing with transparency and «sincerity» the inner substance of her creation. By involving the viewer, she creates conditions and explores phenomena, as conscious experiences without preconceptions, in a personal approach to the meaning of phenomenology.

Finally, for the in situ creation at Kyindromyloi, the words of Bruce Nauman seem apropos, «le véritable artiste aide le monde en mettant au jour des verités mystiques». [2]

Dr. Lina Tsikouta-Deimezii  
Art Historian  
Curator at the National gallery

#### NOTES:

1. «A work concerned with limits, spatial limits, but psychological ones as well.»  
Jean-Marc Bustamante
2. «The true artist helps this human world by revealing hidden truths.»  
Bruce Nauman

ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ ΚΟΛΟΚΟΤΡΩΝΗΣ

**Ν Ε Α** 1974  
2004  
**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ**  
**ΤΕΧΝΗ**



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΘΡΑΚΙΚΗΣ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ & ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗΣ

## Βιβέττα Χριστούλη

Αθήνα, 1966

Πίνακες ζωγραφικής: Ακίνητα, ήσυχα αντικείμενα. Σοφικά ή παυικά διασπάζει. Η ζωγραφική επιφάνεια καλύπτεται από γεωμετρικά σχέδια σε έντονους χρωματισμούς που «κινούνται» από γραμμές και εικονογραφούν το ένα στο άλλο. Η διαδοχική χρήση συμπληρωματικών χρωμάτων, δημιουργεί ένα, μέλλον, ενσυναισθητικό έργο. Η προσέγγιση του πίνακα γίνεται όμοια με το παιχνίδισμα ενός ζωντανού όντος. Οι εικόνες ενεργοποιούνται από τον θεατή και απαντούν σε αυτόν. Οι πίνακες δεν υποδέχονται το βλέμμα, αλλά καθορίζουν και συγκεκριμενοποιούν την όραση. Τα αληθινά, τα ίδια χρώματα, αντιπαρατίθενται στην ψευδαίσθηση, που προκαλείται από τη χρήση του. Εικόνες πο-

Κεντρική Διάδρομος, 2003. Λατομάρια



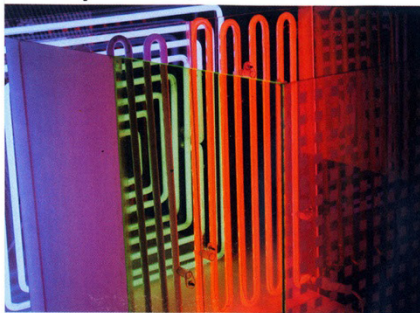
λυετακός. Δεν πρόκειται όμως για ένα μη εκπαυμένο χώρο. Η αδυναμία να εστιάσουμε σε ένα μόνο σημείο είναι χαρακτηριστικό του καιρού μας. Η αλήθεια έπαψε να είναι ορισμένη, οπότε τα πάντα είναι αβέβαια, αλλά και ανοιχτά σε ποικίλες ερμηνείες. Στα έργα από πλαστικό, ο πραγματικός χώρος ενσωματώνεται στο πεδίο αντίληψης κάθε έργου. Ο θεατής υποχρεώνεται να συνειδητοποιήσει την απουσία της διαφορετικής φύσης των δύο χώρων. Του πραγματικού και του βεβα, υπάρχει ανταγωνισμός προς αυτόν, αφού εμποδίζει την ελεύθερη διάδοση σε αυτόν και προ-τρέπει ένα νέο τρόπο περιήγησης, εξερεύνησης και τελικά αντίληψης αυτού. Έτσι επιτυγχάνεται μια ελεύθερη μη-σχέση του έργου με τον τόπο. Κάθε έργο θα μπορούσε να χαρακτηριστεί ως η πρώτη μας κατάσταση, παρά ως μία εγκατάσταση. Όλο το σώμα συμμετέχει και ευθύνεται για την συνολική εντύπωση που προκαλεί το έργο. Η κίνηση του έργου όπως προκαλείται από την κίνηση του θεατή, οι πολλαπλές εικόνες, η περίεργη αίσθηση του χρόνου (ή του χρωματιστού φωτός (νέον) που περιορίζεται σε συγκεκριμένους σχηματισμούς, η παρουσία των ακμών και των αντανακλάσεων, ενισχύουν τις αντιθέσεις μέσα-έξω και περιορισμός, απομόνωση-απελευθέρωση. Καθώς αλλάζει η θέση του θεατή, αλλάζει και η σχέση. Αντικείμενο-περιβάλλον-θεατής. Έτσι, ο θεατής γίνεται, κατά κάποιο τρόπο, μέρος του θέματος του έργου.



Κεντρική Διάδρομος, 2003. Νέον, πλαστικό, αλουμίνιο, 200 x 200 x 500 εκ.



## Επικαιρότητα



### «Περάσματα»: μια εικαστική περιπέτεια με πολλές προεκτάσεις

Η Βιβέττα Χριστούλη και η Γιούλα Χατζηγεωργίου αποφασίζουν να επέμβουν στους χώρους των Κυλινδρόμυλων Σαραντόπουλου.

Το έργο της Χριστούλη με τίτλο «Κεντρικός Διάδρομος» αποτελείται από δύο διαφανείς κύβους τοποθετημένους έτσι ώστε ανάμεσά τους να δημιουργείται πέρασμα 90 εκατοστών. Οι επιφάνειες φέρουν ολόγυρα γεωμετρικά μοτίβα, ενώ στις δύο εσωτερικές πλευρές καταλήγουν σε επιφάνειες από πνοή, οι οποίες εκπέμπουν ένα άυλο φως. Ανάλογα με την κίνηση και την οπτική γωνία του θεατή, το έργο μεταμορφώνεται και ο σκληρός προτεινόμενος διάδρομος προκαλεί τους επισκέπτες να τον διασχίσουν.

Η Χατζηγεωργίου ενεργεί σε δύο τοίχους της άλλης αίθουσας, με το έργο της «102.000 βήματα». Με τη βοήθεια επιδίοσκοπίου και μιας σταγόνας νερού, μετατρέπει τον ένα τοίχο σε μια παράξενη, εφιαλτική επιφάνεια κατά το ήμισυ ακίνητη και κατά το ήμισυ κινούμενη. Μια παλλόμενη μήτρα ιδωμένη σε υπερηχογράφημα, ο χάρτης ενός άγνωστου μπηρικού τύπου που έχει ξεχαστεί ή τα αχνάρια από ένα πλήθος βημάτων που χαράσσουν πορείες μέσα από τους λαβύρινθους των προσωπικών μύθων και των ιστορικών πεπρωμένων; Η Κύπρια εικαστικός τοποθετεί επίσης στο χώρο ένα ξεριζωμένο δέντρο, του οποίου οι εκτεθειμένες ρίζες κινούνται εκτελώντας ανεπαίσθητα βήματα.

*Η έκθεση διαρκεί ως τις 21 Δεκεμβρίου και πραγματοποιείται σε συνεργασία με τις γκαλερί «7» και «Αίθουσα Τέχνης Αθηνών». Την επιμέλειά της έχει αναλάβει η Λίνα Τσικουτά. Τετάρτη ως Παρασκευή 13-21 μ.μ., Σάββατο-Κυριακή 12-18 μ.μ. Χρυσόστομου Σμύρνης και Κενταύρων, Καμίνια*

## Highlights December 2003

### Τέχνη στη σκιά

Χαμένο μέσα στο λαβύρινθο του Βιομηχανικού Πειραιά το εργοστάσιο Αλευροποιίας του Σαραντόπουλου, φιλοξενεί αραίες και πού κάποιες δυνατές εικαστικές παρεμβάσεις. Αυτό τον καιρό δύο καλλιτέχνες: τη Βιβέττα Χριστούλη, που εγκατέστησε ένα έργο από «νέον», απολογισμένα επιθετικό, αφού καλεί τον επισκέπτη να περάσει μέσα από ένα στενό πέρασμα τον «διάδρομο» διαμέσου ενός φωτεινού κύβου – τα χρωματιστά φώτα του «καίνε». Μια άλλη καλλιτέχνης, η Γιούλα Χατζηγεωργίου, ντύνει τους τοίχους της τεράστιας αποθήκης με μια προβολή που καθρεφτίζει την κίνηση των υγρών και λαδιών αυτοκινήτου, ενώ στο κέντρο της αίθουσας ένα ξεριζωμένο δέντρο ξεραίνεται. Τέχνη με φως που λάμπει στο μισοσκόταδο, λίγο πιο πέρα από τις υπερφωτισμένες «μεγαεκθέσεις» της οδού Πειραιάς, στα Καμίνια, Χρ. Σμύρνης και Κενταύρων για όσους ζητούν κάτι έξω από την πεπατημένη.

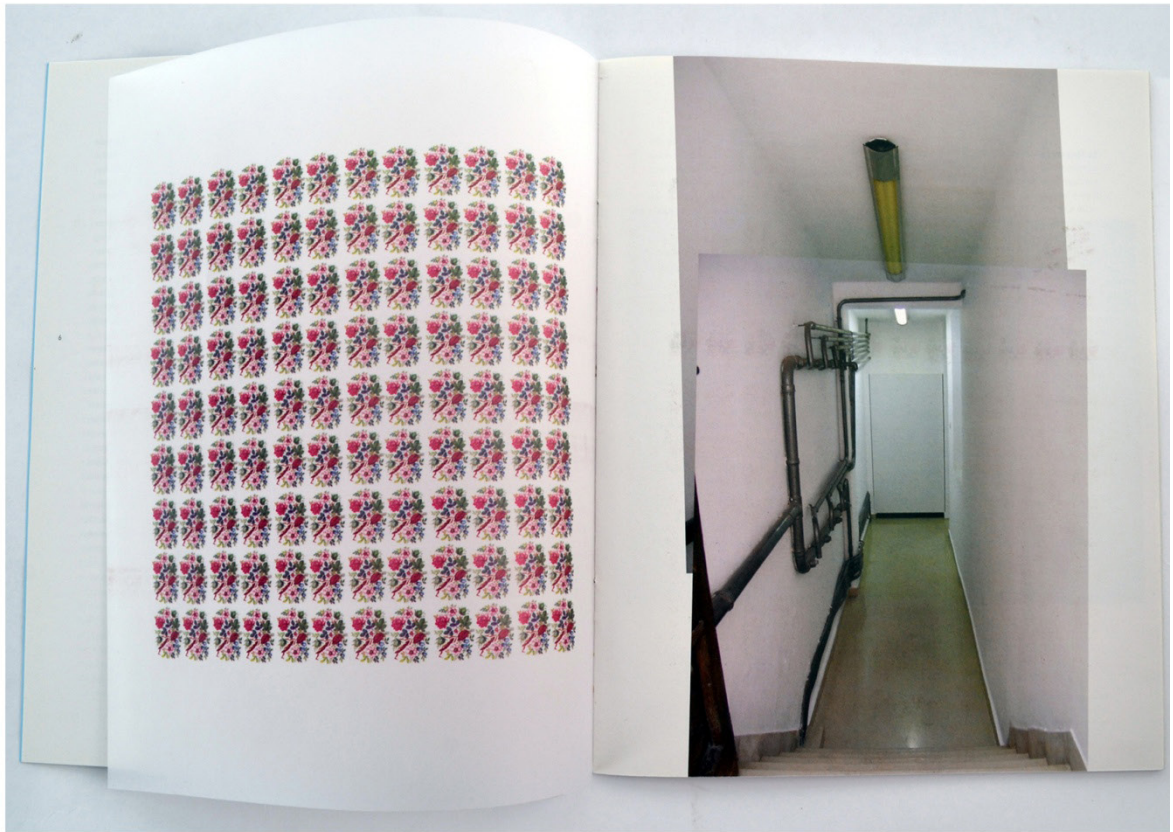
Π.Κ.

ΤΑ ΝΕΑ 31-10-2003

Ta Nea 31/10/2003, P. Katimertzi

Βιβέττα Χριστούλη | Vivetta Christouli  
Συμπύκνωση επί τόπου | In site compression





**Μεταβάσεις** Η Βιβέττα Χριστούλη εντρυφεί στις έννοιες των αντιθέτων κενού-πλήρους, διαφάνειας-αδιαφάνειας, παρουσίας-απουσίας. Οι in situ εγκαταστάσεις στη γκαλερί «7» δημιουργούν περιβάλλοντα που συνδυάζονται μεταξύ τους εμπλέκοντας σωματικά τον θεατή και θέτοντας στο επίκεντρο την οπτική αντίληψη και την φυσική του υπόσταση, ζητούμενο που απασχολεί την Χριστούλη από παλιά.

Ο διάδρομος, ο οποίος λειτουργεί συνήθως σαν είσοδος στον εκθεσιακό χώρο, μεταλλάσσεται από την καλλιτέχνη σε εφ'ημέρο έργο τέχνης, εγκλωβίζοντας τον επισκέπτη στο μακρόστενο κέλυφος του. Έγχρωμες χαλκομανίες με τυπωμένα λουλούδια που διακοσμούσαν τα χρόνια του '70 πλαστικά σκεύη καλύπτουν άναρχα τους τοίχους και την οροφή δημιουργώντας μια κλειστοφοβική και υπερφορτωμένη ατμόσφαιρα με χαρακτήρα εσκεμμένα kitsch. Οι επενδυμένες επιφάνειες του διαδρόμου που φέρνουν στο νου ιδιόμορφες ταπεταρίες μιας άλλης εποχής καθιστούν τον χώρο από απλό πέρασμα σε συμπιεσμένο εικαστικό τοπίο που λειτουργεί ταυτόχρονα σαν ρευστός τόπος ανάμεσα στο μέσα και το έξω.

Το βιομηχανικό υλικό, με την εναλλαγή εικόνας και διαφάνειας, επιτρέπει την ενδιάμεση όραση η οποία ξεδιπλώνει τα εικονογραφικά παλίμψηστα που κατακλύζουν το χώρο και βομβαρδίζουν οπτικά τον επισκέπτη. Οι επάλληλες στρώσεις των ιδίων φύλλων χαλκομανίας, τοποθετημένων και από τις δύο όψεις, τονίζουν τις διαφορετικές υφές και προκαλούν οπτικές παλινδρομήσεις ενώ αποκαλύπτουν έμμεσα τα διαδικαστικά στάδια παραγωγής του έργου. Η επανάληψη και η ομοιομορφία των μοτίβων, οι παραμορφώσεις που προκαλούνται από τις στρωματογραφικές επικαλύψεις, τα έντονα χρώματα και η βαριά, μπαρόκ αισθητική συνθέτουν μια απειλητική, ασφυκτική ατμόσφαιρα η οποία έρχεται σε πλήρη αντίθεση με την αύρα των έργων στην κυρίως αίθουσα.

Συμπυκνώνοντας τον πραγματικό χώρο σε μια εγκατάσταση η οποία απνκεί την αρχιτεκτονική δομή του, η Χριστούλη συνθέτει ένα σύμπλεγμα –ένα κέλυφος μέσα στο κέλυφος– με μεγάλη οικονομία μέσων. Η σκιαγράφιση του εσωτερικού της αίθουσας, η αφηρημένη απεικόνιση του χώρου μέσα στον ίδιο το χώρο, η χαρτογράφηση, ή αλλιώς, ο γεωμετρικός αντικατοπτρισμός της πραγματικότητας, επιτυγχάνονται μέσα από την απτή προβολή δύο ακανόνιστων γεωμετρικών

**Transitions** Vivetta Christouli indulges in the notions of the opposites empty-full, transparent-opaque, presence-absence. The site specific installations at the gallery "7" form environments that are in dialogue with one another, involving the viewer's bodily participation and focusing on his/her visual perception and physical substance, issues that have concerned Christouli from the past.

The gallery's corridor, that usually functions as the entrance to the exhibition space, has been transformed by the artist into a temporary work of art, enclosing the visitor in its long and narrow architectural shell. Colored decalcomania with printed flowers, used in the Seventies to decorate plastic vessels, cover in a disorderly manner the walls and the ceiling creating a claustrophobic and burdened atmosphere, deliberately kitsch. The adorned surfaces of the corridor recall the peculiar wallpaper of a past epoch and transform the room from a simple passage-way into a compressed artistic landscape which functions simultaneously as a flowing spot between the inner and outer space.

The industrial material, with its alternation between images and transparency, permits the intermediate sight which unfolds the iconographic palimpsests that fill the space, visually bombarding the viewer. The successive strata of the same leaves of decalcomania, pasted on both their sides, stress the different textures and provoke visual retrogressions while revealing indirectly the various stages in the process of the art-work's production. The repetition and the similarity of the motifs, the distortions caused by the overlapping layers, the strenuous colors and the heavy, baroque aesthetics, compose a threatening and suffocating atmosphere that is in total contrast with the aura emitted by the works in the main exhibition room.

By condensing the real space into an installation that reflects its actual architectural structure, Christouli composes a cluster –a shell within the shell– with a great economy of means. The sketching of the room's interior, the abstract representation of the space within the same space, the mapping, or else, the geometric reflection of reality, are achieved by the tangible projection of two

όγκων. Τα τρισδιάστατα συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία που αιωρούνται από την οροφή της γκαλερί απορτίζονται από διαφανές ύφασμα, κρέμονται ελαφρώς χαμηλότερα από το ανθρώπινο βλέμμα –παρέχοντας θέα από ψηλά–, περιβάλλουν τις δύο κολώνες της αίθουσας και τις ενσωματώνουν στη σύνθεση του έργου.

Το ευαίσθητο και εύθραυστο υλικό της οργάντζας σπάει την ψυχρή ακρίβεια των σχημάτων, δίνοντας την οικεία αίσθηση του χειροποίητου. Η διαφανής υπόστασή του επιτρέπει στην όραση να διαπεράσει τις ανάλαφρες φόρμες, αποκαλύπτοντας στον θεατή τα προοπτικά παιχνίδια μεταξύ του έργου και του φυσικού χώρου που αυτό καταλαμβάνει. Στον διάλογο αυτόν έρχεται να προστεθεί η παρουσία του ίδιου του θεατή, του οποίου η πορεία χαράζεται, καθορίζεται αλλά και περιορίζεται εσκεμμένα από το ίδιο το εναέριο εικαστικό περιβάλλον.

Για άλλη μια φορά η Χριστούλη συνυφαίνει αντίθετες καταστάσεις αντιπαραθέτοντας τον αέρινο χαρακτήρα του έργου και την ψευδαίσθηση του κενού που προκαλεί η μορφολογική λακωνικότητα και η διαφάνειά του με το συναίσθημα της πίεσης που υφίσταται ο θεατής από την πύκνωση του χώρου σε δύο κουτιά τα οποία στοιχειώνουν με τις διαστάσεις τους την αίθουσα. Οι συμπληρωματικές φόρμες που απορτίζουν ένα ενιαίο σύνολο αιωρούνται σε μικρή απόσταση μεταξύ τους σαν ουτοπικά νησιά ή γιγάντια φαντάσματα, υποδηλώνοντας ξανά το ενδιαφέρον της Χριστούλη για τα περάσματα, τον χώρο ανάμεσα στα πράγματα αλλά και τη διαλεκτική σχέση έργου-θεατή.

Η πληθωρική και βίαιη επιβολή της φτηνής εικόνας αντιπαρατίθεται με την ακραία λιτότητα, η αίσθηση του χάους με την αίσθηση της τάξης, σε εγκαταστάσεις που δημιουργούν έντονες οπτικές εναλλαγές και μεταβάλλουν συνεχώς την ψυχολογική διάθεση του δέκτη-επισκέπτη.

Μπία Παπαδοπούλου  
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΟΣ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ

irregular geometrical volumes. The three-dimensional, complementary elements are composed from a diaphanous cloth; they hung slightly lower from the human eye –providing a bird's eye view– and surround the two columns of the room, incorporating them into the art-work's composition.

The sensitive and fragile material consisting of organza slightly breaks the frigid accuracy of the shapes, evoking the familiar sensation of the hand-made. The transparent substance allows sight to penetrate the light forms, revealing to the recipient the games of perspective which take place between the work and the natural space it occupies. To this dialogue, the presence of the viewer is added whose course is traced, defined and intentionally confined by the ethereal artistic environment.

Once again, Christouli interweaves opposite situations by juxtaposing the airy quality of the work and the illusion of void evoked by its morphological laconism and transparency with the feeling of restriction sensed by the viewer due to the compression of space into two boxes that haunt the room with their size. The complimentary forms that constitute a single unit float in the air in minute distance from one another like utopian islands or gigantic ghosts, indicating again Christouli's interest in passages, the in between space and the dialectic relationship between the art-work and the viewer.

The plethoric and violent infliction of the cheap image is juxtaposed with the extreme simplicity of means, the feeling of chaos with the sense of order, in installations that create vigorous visual surprises constantly alternating the visitor's psychological disposition.

Βία Παπαδοπούλου  
ART HISTORIAN

**Σε τόπο μη-τόπο** *Non-site*. Αμφισβητώ στο έθιμο και τον ορίζοντα εντείνοντας για απεικονιστικό... Στην πραγματικότητα δεν είναι ο ορίζοντας που ορίζει την απεικονιστικότητα. Είναι η απεικονιστικότητα που προσδιορίζει τον ορίζοντα. «Αλλά η είναι αυτή η απεικονιστικότητα αν έλε ο ορίζοντας της παρουσίας μας.» «Μου φαίνεται σαν ένας τόπος, ένας μαγεμένος τόπος.»

Το αρχικό τόπος προσφέρει αβυσσώδη και πολυπλοκότητα σημαίας και χώρου. Σε εποχή με αυτήν την πλούσια των πληροφοριών, ο κενός χώρος της αβυσσώδους τέχνης που περιμένει: έργα τέχνης να τον γεμίσουν, ώστε διαστάσεις διασφραγιστεί από τις πραγματικές.

Μέσα σε αυτό το χώρο θα ήθελα να μιλήσω για έναν τόπο. Έναν τόπο που ορίζεται από την αβεβαιότητα των ανώνυμων έργων-χώρου. Ο τόπος αυτός δεν έχει μια πραγματική περιγραφή, απλώς όπως ένα κτίριο ή κενή όπως ο χώρος ανάμεσα σε δύο κτίρια. Ο τόπος αυτός είναι μη στατικός. Ούτε μπορεί να υπάρξει ως μια σταθερή ολότητα στον χώρο.

Θα ήθελα να μιλήσω και για έναν μη-τόπο. Όπως αυτός ορίζεται από την διαφορά νοήματος ανάμεσα στο έργο και το χώρο.

Ο τόπος και ο μη-τόπος είναι συνάδελφοι πόλοι. Ο ένας ποτέ δεν καταργείται, ο άλλος ποτέ δεν ολοκληρώνεται. Ο μη-τόπος είναι το μέτρο του πρώτου.

Η εμπειρία του χώρου γύρω μας είναι αναγκαστικά με την υποστήριξη μέσα σ' αυτό. Όταν ο κόσμος των αντικειμένων καταργείται, προκύπτει μια αίσθηση του κενού χώρου, του κενού χωρίς πράγματα. Αυτό συμβαίνει την νύχτα... «Στη νύχτα δεν υπάρχουν περιγράμματα. Εγώ βρίσκομαι σε επαφή με τον εαυτό μου.»

Βιβέτα Χριστούλη

**In-site Non-site** *We look*. Between the looking and the horizon there is an expanded openness... In fact it is not the horizon, which gives us openness. It is the openness which gives us the horizon. "But what is this openness as such, if we disregard that it can also appear as the horizon of our representing?" It strikes me as something like a region, an enchanted region.<sup>11</sup>

The urban landscape offers a profusion and complexity of signs and spaces. In contact to this excess of information the gallery's empty space, waiting for works of art to be fulfilled, is distorted.

In this gallery's space I would like to talk about some kind of a site. The site that arises in the uncertainties over the borders and limits of work and its place.

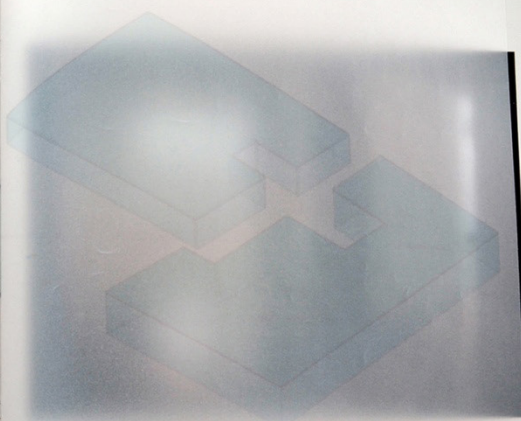
That site doesn't occupy any physically real form, whether a solid such as a building, or a void, such as a space between two buildings. Site can be thought of as non static. The site cannot exist as a permanent knowable whole.

I would also like to talk about non-site. As it is defined in the lacks of meaning, through which the artwork and its place may be momentarily articulated one in the other.

Site and non-site are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed. Non-sites are real measure of our time.

The experience of spatiality is related to our implantation in the world. When the world of objects is abolished, there evolves a spatiality without things. This is what happens in the night... "Night has no outlines, I is itself in contact with me."<sup>12</sup>

Vivetta Christouli



Falkner H.W. (1996) Phenomenology, Stockholm, Stockholm University.  
 Veldegar M. (1984) *Discourse on Thinking* (Bressanone), trans. J. M. Anderson and E. H. Freud, New York: Harger.  
 The Centre M. (1984) *The Practice of everyday life*, Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press.

**Κλειστροφóbικη πέραση αναμνήσεων. Αντιστροφή συνθήκης χώρου** *My relation* - a mutual course of action in individual and group exhibitions - with Vivetta Christouli dates back to 2000. Since then, the young artist continues to amaze me by the methodical and laborious evolution of her art, the continuous renewal of the artistic means, the systematic promotion of the artistic quests, the search for new proposals, the reinforcement of her theoretical choices, through the steady continuity of her creative obsessions.

Using different ways of approach and presentation, Vivetta Christouli explores specific inner issues concerning the relationship between the terminological framework and the aesthetic performance. All her creations are governed by common characteristics, despite the initial feeling of different approaches.

Christouli firstly, competes with and opposes herself to space, transforms and alters it. She reaches up to the overthrow of its existent entente. Her works often emerge as 'obstacles' in the surroundings, making thus, hard the even crossing and creating a 'disturbance' to the viewer. Other times she obliges the viewer to pass through a difficult, problematic and oppressing passage which causes intense experiences, requiring at the same time his physical participation. Finally, the moving of the viewer within the work of art, the 'compelling' of this specific crossing, viewing and feeling constitutes a part of the work.

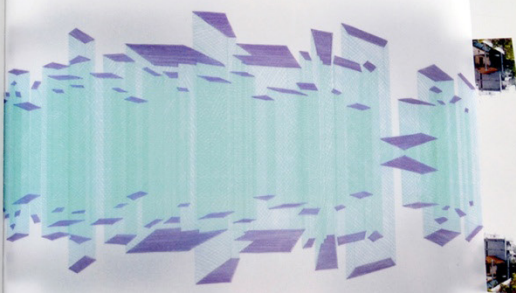
The artist proposes a particular perception of the external reality and insists on urging the viewer to observe the phenomena having a spirit of cognizant experience which reaches to the daedalic footpath of phenomenology. The evaluation of the appearing and of the being constitutes a dominant structural element of her art. The relationship between the illusion and the reality, during the creation of the work, increases the intensity of the outcome and sensations. Another dominant element is the role of the transparency and the effect of the light, despite the diversity of the means and of the materials used.

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### Κλειστοφοβικό πέρασμα αναμνήσεων. Αντιστροφή συν-θήκης χώρου

Η σχέση μου –κοινή συμπόρευση δράσης σε εκθέσεις ομαδικές ή ατομικές– με τη Βιβέττα Χριστούλη χρονολογείται από το 2000. Έκτοτε η νεαρή καλλιτέχνης εξοικονομεί να με εκπλήσσει ευχάριστα με την μεθοδική, επίπονη εξέλιξη της τέχνης της, τη συνεχή ανανέωση των εικαστικών μέσων, τη συστηματική προώθηση των αναζητήσεων, τη διερεύνηση νέων προτάσεων, την ενίσχυση των θεωρητικών επιλογών της, μέσα από τη σταθερή συνέχεια των δημιουργικών εμμονών της.

Με διαφορετικούς τρόπους προσέγγισης και παρουσίασης η Βιβέττα Χριστούλη διερευνά συγκεκριμένα ζητήματα, ενδογενή, της σχέσης εννοιολογικού πλαισίου και αισθητικής απόδοσης. Κοινά χαρακτηριστικά διέπουν όλες τις δημιουργίες της, παρά την αρχική αίσθηση διαφορετικών προσεγγίσεων.

Η Χριστούλη πρωτίτως ανταγωνίζεται, αντιπαράκειται στο χώρο, τον μεταμορφώνει, τον μεταλλάσσει. Φθάνει σ' αυτή την ίδια την ανατροπή της υπάρχουσας συνθήκης του. Συχνά τα έργα της εμφανίζονται ως «εμπόδια» στον περιβάλλοντα χώρο, δυσκολεύοντας την ομαλή διάβαση, δημιουργώντας μια «ενόχληση» στον θεατή. Άλλοτε τον υποχρεώνει να διέλθει από ένα δύσκολο, προβληματικό και πιεστικό πέρασμα, προκαλώντας φορτισμένες βιωματικές καταστάσεις, ενώ απαιτεί τη σωματική συμμετοχή του θεατή. Τέλος η κίνηση του θεατή μέσα στο έργο, ο «εξαναγκασμός» της συγκεκριμένης διέλευσης, θέασης και αίσθησης αποτελεί τμήμα του έργου.

Η καλλιτέχνης προτείνει μια ιδιαίτερη πρόσληψη της εξωτερικής πραγματικότητας, επιμένει να ωθεί τον θεατή να παρατηρήσει φαινόμενα με μια διάθεση συνειδητών βιωμάτων, ακουμπώντας στα δαιδαλώδη μονοπάτια της φαινομενολογίας. Η αξιολόγηση του φαίνεσθαι και του είναι αποτελεί κυρίαρχο δομικό στοιχείο της τέχνης της. Η σχέση ψευδαισθήσεως και πραγματικότητας, στο πλαίσιο του έργου, αυξάνει την ένταση του αποτελέσματος και των αισθήσεων. Άλλο κυρίαρχο στοιχείο, παρά την διαφοροποίηση των μέσων και των υλικών, είναι ο ρόλος της διαφάνειας και της επίδρασης του φωτός.

### Claustrophobic passage of memories. Reversal of the space entente

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Στην πέμπτη ατομική της έκθεση με τίτλο «Συμπύκνωση Επί Τόπου», η Βιβέττα Χριστούλη, δημιουργεί δύο in situ αντιθετικά, αλληλοσυμπληρούμενα έργα, τα οποία διέπονται από όλες τις αρχές και τα χαρακτηριστικά που προαναφέραμε. Ο εισαγωγικός, πιεστικός, κλειστοφοβικός διάδρομος, καλυμμένος από τις, βιωματικού χαρακτήρα, κακόγουστες και με κακοτεχνίες τοποθετημένες, χαλκομανίες, αποτελεί ένα εφήμερο έργο.

Ο διάδρομος συνδέεται με τη δεύτερη εγκατάσταση κυρίως εννοιολογικά και θεωρητικά, μιας και τα δύο έργα διερευνούν τη σχέση του ανθρώπου με το χώρο όπου ζει. Το δεύτερο έργο είναι μια απλή, ευάλωτη, αντίστροφη ανακατασκευή του χώρου της γκαλερί, από διαφανές ύφασμα, που αιωρείται στο χώρο. Μια ιπτάμενη, αέρινη, σχηματοποιημένη οπτασία, «σαν παρωδία του «μνημειακού» έργου», όπως λέει η ίδια. Τέλος η σειρά από σχέδια παρουσιάζει δύο αντίστροφες πόλεις, την κάτω και την αντεστραμμένη, που υπερίπταται. Το ενδιαφέρον της καλλιτέχνιδας εστιάζεται στον ενδιάμεσο χώρο.

Λιτές, μιμητιστικές, απλές προσεγγίσεις των θεωρητικών και αισθητικών εμμονών της Χριστούλη, που συνδυάζουν, σε όλα τα επίπεδα της δημιουργίας, και σε ισότιμη δόση, τη δύναμη της κυρίαρχης ιδέας, με την ένταση της αισθητικής απόλαυσης. Η πεμπτουσία της ανατροπής της υπάρχουσας συνθήκης, τόσο σε ότι αφορά το ρόλο του χώρου του θεατή σε σχέση με το έργο τέχνης, όσο και το ρόλο του ίδιου του έργου τέχνης. Κυρίαρχη η ενίσχυση του πνευματικού στοιχείου.

Δρ Λίνα Τσίκουτα-Δεϊμέζη  
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΟΣ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ  
ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΙΝΑΚΟΘΗΚΗΣ

In her fifth individual exhibition bearing the title 'In Site Compression', Vivetta Christouli creates two in situ opposite but complementary works, which are governed by all the principles and the characteristics mentioned earlier. The entering, oppressing and claustrophobic corridor covered by personal ill-tasted transfers, placed badly into space, constitutes an ephemeral work.

The corridor is mainly connected to the second installation terminologically and theoretically, since both works explore the relationship between the man and the space where he lives. The second work is a simple, vulnerable, reverse reconstruction of the space of the gallery created by transparent fabric that floats in the space. A flying, ethereal, shaped vision, 'like a parody of the "monumental" work', as she says. Finally, the series of sketches presents two reverse cities, the one below and the inversed one that flies over. The artist's interest is focused on the space in between.

The frugal, minimal, simple approaches of the theoretical and aesthetic obsessions of Christouli combine the force of the dominant idea with the intensity of the aesthetic pleasure, equally in every level of creation. This is the essence of the overthrow of the existent entente concerning both the role of the space of the viewer in relation to the work of art and the work of art itself. The reinforcement of the spiritual element is dominant.

Dr Lina Tsikouta-Deimezi  
HISTORIAN OF ART  
CURATOR OF THE NATIONAL ART GALLERY

## Ο θεατής σε άσκηση ύφους

Καιρό είχαμε να δούμε το έργο που δεν επικρέμαται ή δεν επκολλάται στον τοίχο, που δεν είναι εικόνα στην οθόνη ή γλυπτό στο χώρο.

Σε εποχές σκληρής οικονομικής κρίσης οι καλλιτέχνες κρατούν τις διαθέσεις τους για επί τόπου εγκαταστάσεις, μη μεταφερόμενες, εφήμερες δηλαδή, για τα μουσεία (επικουρούμενοι και από τους γκαλερίστες που αδυνατούν να διακινήσουν έργα του είδους), με αποτέλεσμα να μας εκπλήξει διπλά η έκθεση της Χριστούλη.

Και επειδή είχαμε νοσταλγήσει το είδος και γιατί πρόκειται για μια σοβαρή δουλειά με εξαιρετικό αποτέλεσμα, για το οποίο οφείλουμε να επαινέσουμε και την γκαλερί που λειτούργησε έξω από κάθε εμπορικό ενδιαφέρον.

Μπαίνοντας στο χώρο ο επισκέπτης βρίσκεται σε ένα διάδρομο, επενδυμένο από πάνω ως κάτω με πλουμιστό λαϊκό μοτίβο σε πλαστικό ή άλλως (για να το κατανοήσουν και οι του χώ-

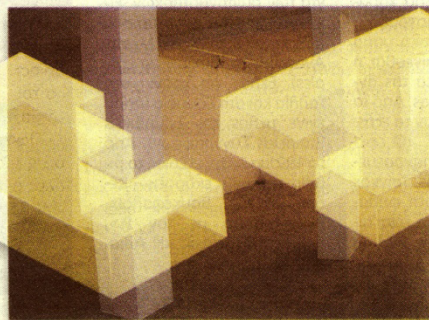
ρου) σε επαναλαμβανόμενο εικονογραφικό παλίμψηστο, αποτέλεσμα επάλληλων τυπωμάτων της ίδιας εικόνας. Το υλικό δεν είναι ready made, αλλά ζωγραφισμένο και τυπωμένο από τη Χριστούλη. Τα έντονα χρώματα, ζαλιστικά από τις επάλληλες στρώσεις,

και η μωριαδιά του πλαστικού λειτουργούν από κλειστοφοβικά έως απειλητικά. Η πορεία, φυσική και οπτική, οδηγεί στην κυρίως αίθουσα,

όπου ένα πάλλευκο περιβάλλον.

Από το έντονο χρώμα στο απόλυτο λευκό, λοιπόν, μιας κατασκευής από διάφανη οργάντζα, η οποία καταλαμβάνει το χώρο ορίζοντας το απόλυτο του κενού, το οποίο, ωστόσο, ενέχει και πάλι μια απειλή.

Ζητήματα οντολογικά και υπαρξιακά, κάτι σαν αναπνοή καλού ερμηνευτή του Μπέκετ, ζητήματα χώρου και μη χώρου. Το σώμα, η σχέση του με



«Συμπύκνωση επί τόπου», ένα από τα έργα της Βιβέττας Χριστούλη

το άπειρο, η στενότητα των ορίων εκείνου που ορίζουμε ως απέραντο, η διαφάνεια και το βλέμμα μέσα-έξω-δια μέσου, το κενό και το πλήρες, η οπτική και εννοιολογική ερμηνεία τού φαινομένου και του είναι, μέσα από την παρουσία των εμποδίων που θέτει το άπλετο.

Πού βρίσκεται το έργο, πού ο χώρος που το φιλοξενεί και πόσο ανταλλάξιμες είναι οι σχέσεις αυτών των δύο ή

μάλλον των τριών, αφού ο χώρος και το έργο έχουν προορισμό την πρόσκληση του ανθρώπου; Ένα μπαρόκ και ένα μινιμαλιστικό έργο και μαζί, για τον προσεκτικό θεατή, το ψυχολογικό πορτρέτο αυτών των έργων, σε ψηφιακή εκτύπωση, μια οριακή ανατροπή της κυρίαρχης συνθήκης, με το κενό που δημιουργεί ένα κομμάτι της πόλης απέναντι στην αντιστροφή της εικόνας του.