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Controlling Agent: Artist and Spectator in the Film Actions of Gill Eatherley and Annabel Nicolson
(Lucy Reynolds)

Theoretical Elisions
On the occasion of *Into the Light*, one of the first retrospective considerations of the moving image installations of the 1960s and 1970s (to which she gave the moniker 'projected light works'), Chrissie Iles observes, citing Barthes, that: 'The cinema becomes a cocoon, inside which a crowd of relaxed, idle bodies is fixed, hypnotized by simulations of reality projected onto a single screen. This model is broken apart by the folding of the dark space of cinema into the white cube of the gallery. Building on Minimalism's phenomenological approach, the darkened gallery's space invites participation, movement, the sharing of multiple viewpoints, the dismantling of the single frontal screen, and an analytical, distanced form of viewing.'[1] Iles' reference to Minimalism's 'phenomenological approach' picks up on Robert Morris' influential 1966 text 'Notes on Sculpture'[2], for its privileging of the spatial contingencies of an encounter with sculpture, implicating the visitor's body in a newly receptive experience with its material forms, based on spatial orientation, measurement and exchange with the object. Morris' paradigm of phenomenologically determined spectatorship, as Iles' text acknowledges, has remained a potent model for theorising spectatorship of the moving image in the gallery, by introducing the notion of mobility and heightened spatial awareness as a valid and critical mode of reception. It might be argued that what has been at stake here is the case for film as an art form worthy of, and suited to, the spatial conditions of the museum and gallery: a case which curators such as Iles, endorsing the ambitious rehabilitation project of *Into the Light*, were keen to make.

And Iles is by no means unique. Maeve Connolly observes how during the 1990s and early 2000s a 'theorization of reception' had developed in relation to the gallery space which claims that 'criticality is specifically aligned with mobility'[3], and which implicitly builds on these predecessors in post-war modernism to emphasise the significance of a spectator spatialised experience of the moving image in the new contexts offered to it by the museum and gallery. If we return to Iles' text we might discern how it reflects a beguiling mix of phenomenology, radical politics and Brechtian distanciation in support of its claims for this mode of critical viewing, and the importance of an individualised sense of instrumentality as a means to facilitate it. This has often led to a reductive elision of counter-cultural ethics to the very different context of institutionalisation and art's economic market, which attend current spectatorial perambulations of moving image in the gallery or biennale. For Volker Pantenburg it is a 'dubious theoretical move' where 'concepts of mobility, participation, activity or critique are often placed on one and the

same level and are mutually identified with one another.' As he argues: 'What remains vague in this augmentation is why a strolling visitor in a gallery or museum should automatically be more reflective, critical or alert than someone sitting in a cinema seat.'[4]

What Pantenburg brings into question in his critique is not only the misplaced assumption that viewer engagement is more fully activated through mobile engagement, but also the implication that this model of liberation is rooted in historic models of expanded cinema. By contrast, looking back at those early mobile spectators of expanded cinema works, it would appear that engagement with film outside the context of the auditorium existed in many registers across a range of different approaches, and with a number of different artistic intentions, some more overtly political than others, and many with a temporally determined emphasis on live event, which conformed to neither the mobile models of cinema nor the gallery. At one extreme, VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel's *Kriegskunst feldzug (War Art Campaign)* (1969) was intended to 'provoke the audience, and make possible new, uncontrolled forms of perception and participation'.[5] Equally, we might also extend the phenomenological model first advocated by Morris to the more subtle intersubjective exchanges that Amelia Jones identifies between performer and audience in the 'body art' of artists such as Carolee Schneemann, where, she argues, a singular and nuanced reciprocity exists which is 'always particularized rather than universal, implicating the interpreter (with all her investedness, biases and desires) within the meanings and cultural values ascribed to the work of art.'[6]

These brief examples, which might also include Malcolm Le Grice's film performance *Horror Film 1* (1970) or Birgit and Wilhem Hein's encompassing three-screen work *Materialfilme* (1976)[7], denote the diverse forms of participation which expanded cinema attempted to elicit during the 1960s and 1970s: whether directly tactile or more subtly reciprocal. Furthermore, notably characteristic of these works, and many other expanded works of the period, is the marked centrality of the artist's embodied presence as performer and orchestrator in the structuring of a dialogue with the audience. The artist might be seen to act as inveigler, provocateur or even translator for the viewer's comprehension of the film event: breaking the stride of the mobile spectator.

It could be argued that these diverse strategies of authorial presence are a way to retain the focused expression of attentiveness which had been lost in the transition of film from the auditorium's space of enclosure to the open encounters of the gallery, whilst at the same time offering the promise of a new agency, through participation and interaction, in the apprehension of the film image. Erika Balsom identifies the perceptual shift engendered by the move from cinema to gallery as more than simply the exchange of 'mobility

versus stasis' but more profoundly about: 'spectator's relationship to time and attention'[8], a notion which has been most succinctly theorised by Peter Osborne, in his discussion of Benjamin's notion of apperception, as a play between the attentive pull of the moving image screen and the distracted gaze characteristic of the gallery experience[9]. However, rather than the environmental controls of the auditorium suggested by Barthes' cinema cocoon, where external stimuli are arguably curtailed[10]; or the control relinquished to the conditions of distraction and attention which Osborne has intuited in the gallery, it could be argued that, in the works of Le Grice, Export or Weibel, it is the artist who acts as an agent of attention rather than the viewer, asserting him- or herself as a point of focus or calibration for the competing sensations of the film event or installation.

Thus, it could be argued that, in these early works, spectatorial mobility is more often contingent on the artist's presence than liberated from it: as authors come to function as a body of resistance interposing their own purposes upon the viewer, in order to shape the latter's reading of the work, often in a way that draws the spectator into a covert but structuring role in its completion. In order to consider the question of the artist filmmaker as a controlling agent I will focus on three works by British artists working with expanded film practices in 1970s London: Gill Eatherley's three-screen work *Shot Spread* (1973) and Annabel Nicolson's participatory film performance *Precarious Vision* (1973) and her paracinematic work *Doorway* (1974). I am interested not so much in the directly challenging address of some of the film actions already mentioned, as in their use of more subtle measures of coercion such as presence, suggestion, and surprise, which suggest that mobility might be seen as less about perambulation and more about an encounter between authorial and spectatorial bodies in motion.

Shot Spread: Presence and Participation

Unlike EXPORT or Weibel, Gill Eatherley's performance in *Shot Spread* does not forcibly demand the attention of the viewer. Rather, she insinuates herself into the spectatorial field through covert strategies of sound and movement which trespass unexpectedly into the space of the viewer, throwing off balance an orientation which is divided between three intermittently flashing screens, fellow viewers and the space around them. At first the three-screen black-and-white film of London pigeons gathering on a pavement seems unspectacular in itself.[11] Never appearing in tandem, the images flip from positive to negative, upside down, and sideways across the three screens in mimicry of the birds' jerky, comic movements. Rather than a neat triptych, the rectangles of light flick in and out of darkness, spreading from left to right in alternate patterns to create a further allusion to the twitchy rhythms of the pigeons.

In synchronicity with the pulsing images on the screens, the accompanying sound is that of a helicopter in flight, playing as an optical soundtrack from one of the projectors and relayed from speakers beside the screens. As the insistent sound seems to fade out, Eatherley herself appears without warning in the darkened space of the audience and moves amongst them with a portable cassette player – also playing the sound of the whirring helicopter blades in sudden and unexpected proximity to the viewer. As she says: '*This sounds fades out and comes down off the screen into the audience ... same sound – played on a CD or cassette – portable – is carried around amongst the audience – flying, held high, low, from front to back of space, next to people's ears, under, over them ... and then CD sound fades and the major sound fades up again – on the screen – back up in the field of Action.*'[12] The 'field of Action' that Eatherley refers to is that of the correlation she intends between the pigeons and soldiers. The helicopter soundtrack is designed to transform our reading of the birds by evoking in their movements 'military personnel, on a mission, about to be airlifted, wandering lost, in any direction, they flicker about.' As a politically engaged artist at the time of Vietnam, particularly as a campaigner against the dictatorship in Chile, Eatherley's expanded work was part of a series along with the three-screen film *Hand Grenade* (1971) and the film installation *Sicherheits* (1973), depicting found footage imagery of a tornado in a wind tunnel, which she called *militaresque*. She wanted the initial sound from the screen to be 'only one invading sound' – a 'tough sound'[13] which would evoke what she saw as the harsh imperialist policies of Western, and Western-endorsed, nations.

Like many of her contemporaries, Eatherley's disorientating use of sound and multi-screen flicker was designed to locate the viewer in the 'here and now' of the film event. Through the strategies of performance interventions, and the foregrounding of the projection and its enabling apparatus, Eatherley and fellow filmmakers involved with the London Filmmakers' Co-operative at this time were exploring how the viewer might experience a new and enlightened perception of the cinema experience, which took account of their own spatial and temporal location rather than the narrative on screen.[14] According to Eatherley: 'We liked the idea that people could come in, sit down, stay as long as they wanted and get up and go off again. And maybe even come back. It was again the idea of film being used in a totally different way – which was very important.'[15] And it could be posited that her own performance as an agent of auditory movement, by abruptly removing the sound from the projected screen and bringing it into the human scale and proximity of the audience, shatters the space of sonic distance that narrative cinema maintains between viewer and screen both physically and perceptually; and with it the experience of 'spatial magnetization' articulated by Michel Chion[16], where the cinematic viewer learns to locate the source of the sound on

screen, and within the diegesis of the narrative image. Covert and proximate, Eatherley's role as a mobile agent of sound jolts the viewer from this magnetising effect into an awareness of the space and bodies around them.

Eatherley's comments suggest that she favoured the open spaces of the gallery over the darkened chamber of the auditorium for offering a less constrained space, not only for the viewer but also for the artist wishing to try out new filmic configurations. Certainly, with works such as *Sicherheits* and *Chair Installation* (1973), Eatherley was amongst the first of her contemporaries working with expanded film forms at the Co-op, such as Le Grice, Annabel Nicolson, William Raban and David Crosswaite, to present film in the manner of a sculptural installation, and thus to engage with the gallery's extended temporalities and mobile audience. And, looking beyond the theoretical contexts that I have cited, which have lent mobile spectatorship its current critical allure, Eatherley's case shows how ideas about the role of the spectator were more diffusely rooted in the modernist practices and counter-cultural politics of the period than current writing would lead us to believe and were subject to the networks of the artistic community, and art school practices, found in London during the early 1970s. Eatherley may not have been reading Christian Metz, but she had certainly been engaged with the experimental theatre of Samuel Beckett, and the improvisational music practices, not only of fellow filmmaker Le Grice and Keith Rowe with the experimental music group AMM, but also Brian Eno, a friend and fellow student at Winchester art college. Through her friendship with the multi-media kinetic artist David Medalla and his Exploding Galaxy group, she was also actively involved in protests against the Chilean dictatorship, as well as being opened up to the pluralistic art practices, and international artist networks, which he had advocated through his London-based magazine *Signals* in the 1960s. Furthermore, the chance operations and improvisations of Cage were absorbed through her interest in the practices of the Fluxus group rather than a specific identification with Cage's writings or compositions. Eatherley's desire to take film off the wall and into the gallery amongst the viewers, as she put it, is therefore embedded in contemporaneous experimental performance and art practices, rather than the theories of the period. Mainstream cinema was not something that she identified herself with, or engaged with, observing, in retrospect, that films were dismissed by herself and her contemporaries as 'popcorn movies'.

In Eatherley's own embodied mobilisation of sound, we might thus glimpse the new politicized status of the body during the counter-cultural period, as a site of protest against the prevailing cultural and political establishment, not only through film actions and performance, but also through political demonstration, on marches or sit-ins, or through its overt display as a liberating, oppositional factor in the battles of censorship and morality with

conventional society. But, as I have already argued, this is not the shock tactic of the Vienna Actionists, nor the confrontational cinema of Valie Export and Peter Weibel. Unpredictable rather than up front, coercive rather than confrontational, Eatherley enacts a different kind of agency from her contemporaries, but it is none the less concerned with the exertion of control over the viewer, complicating the claim for the liberated states of viewing associated to the gallery space and the mobile spectator.

By subtle presence rather than hostile act, Eatherley's sudden and yet fleeting movement amongst the audience acts as a switch to elicit an attentiveness to the other spatial and temporal dimensions of the screening event: the surrounding environment, sonic and spatial, the gathered audience in the dimmed space and her own covert movements in the space of the viewer. It is also notable that, as a performer, Eatherley does not declare herself. Hidden in the darkness amongst the audience rather than presenting herself to be viewed, she chooses to be an anonymous facilitator of moving sound rather than an identifiable performer. In this way her performance collapses the distinctions between the bodies of artist and technology, as they merge to become a singular agent of embodied sound and motion, instrumental of each other. At the same time, her presence, made elusive through movement, proposes a different set of dynamics for the spectator, stressing movement as orientation and propulsion rather than the reverie of perambulation associated to mobile spectatorship[17]. As she moves through the darkness amongst the audience she is simultaneously heard and unseen – a felt yet elusive presence designed to disorientate the audience and at the same time, through the agency of sound, to draw them into a dynamic dialogue between the mediating elements of projector, artist and screen.

The nuanced encounter that Eatherley orchestrates in *Spread Shot* returns us to the emphasis on attention versus mobility, which Balsom argues for in relation to the experience of film in the gallery. But rather than the Benjaminian notion of apperception raised by Osborne – with its implications of ambivalence and distraction – I would like to posit a psycho-analytical model proposed by a contemporary of Benjamin, and a pupil of Sigmund Freud, Theodor Reik, who examines the relationship between attention and the stimuli which precipitate it, particularly in relation to the experience of surprise rather than more extreme emotions of shock. Reik stresses the importance of attentiveness as 'the readiness to receive a variety of stimuli,' and a significant factor in being alive to both external factors and to be cognisant of their effects in drawing out the unconscious[18]. Writing in the context of his own experience as an analyst, he characterises surprise as a 'defence-reaction' against an 'external perception in which material reality is, so to speak, taken unawares by inner reality.'[19] He observes 'things that were not in the centre of our attention, things that are only brushed at the fringe, a

fleeting impression, a fleeting presentiment, now assume importance.'[20]
Reik's writings suggest that the experience of surprise can bring revelation to experiences and encounters on the periphery, drawing attention again to what did not at first seem significant.

Reik's observations also suggest that surprise not only acts as a trigger for an embodied alertness to the temporal spatial dimensions of the event, but also prepares the ground for a more heightened sense of one's state of being. Thus, the experience of being taken unawares by Eatherley's action of covert control might stimulate a shift of consciousness that allows for a sharper perception of *Spread Shots'* spatially dispersed and sonically disorientating sounds and images. Furthermore, her solicitation of surprise reverberates on a more profound note, as the unheralded shift of attention it precipitates brings forth an experience of the uncanny for the viewer. Reik recognises this when he characterises surprise as 'an expression of our opposition to the demand that we should recognise something long known to us of which we have become unconscious'[21] or rather, it helps, as he puts it, 'the oppressed minorities of the kingdom of the mind to win their rights'[22]. Certainly, as she moves anonymously through the audience, carrying with her the already threatening, but not quite identifiable, sound of whirring blades, it might be argued that Eatherley introduces into the neutral ideal of the gallery's modernist space[23] an uncanny dimension of disorientation and visitation.

The sense of the uncanny drawn forth by the jolt of surprise at Eatherley's proximate presence is significant not only in its suggestive transformations of the space of reception, but for how it equally triggers the release of repressed associations, memories and desires to which Reik alludes; thus furnishing the experience of *Spread Shot* with the deeper resonances of subjective reflection, through the surfacing of lost memories, thoughts and experiences. In this way the action of surprise elicited by the artist performer can offer a different form of liberation from that associated to the mobilised gallery visitor, as inner perambulations once forgotten and repressed enrich the immediate experience of the screening space, in an evocative, unsettling layering of time and memory.

Doorway: capture and escape
Also in question, as one looks across what has now become a canon of key expanded cinema works, is the extent to which audiences were truly mobile. For movement through a gallery must necessarily entail, as Osborne observes, a pattern or rhythm of intermittent pauses and stasis in the apprehension of an artwork, a 'dialectics of continuity and interruption' which he sees, in the case of film and video in the gallery space as 'syncopating the time of the viewer into new rhythms and forms'[24]. I would argue that the expanded film actions and projections of the 1960s and 1970s delineate a

different expression of audience: neither the seated intimate strangers of Barthes' cocoon; nor the new *flânerie* of the gallery space. Osborne comes closest in his description of the mobile film audience as a 'privatised, serial, small group affair' distinct from the 'cinematic masses of Kraucauer's picture palaces'[25]. But his description does not capture the sense of loose, but cohesive, configuration which expanded film events engender: where the gathering is not subject to the ebb and flow of audience dispersal determined by individual time frames but remains collectively committed to the shared time and place of a given film or performance event. Yet, without the fixed seating of the cinema, this informal grouping of viewers exists in a continual reconstituting and shifting movement around the object of attention, producing a curtailed audience mobility subject to small circulations within, rather than away from, the open space of the gallery and in close proximity to fellow viewers.

We might approximate this informal gathering to the milling of a small crowd around an attraction, as they reposition themselves for a better view. And whilst this model evokes the *flâneur* figure drawn to the street spectacle, the milling of an expanded cinema audience is distinct, as I note above, in its adherence to the duration of the event. For here, time and attention exert their hold over the viewer not as the syncopations articulated by Osborne, but as a form of capture and control, however subtle, that brings into question the liberating claims for mobile spectatorship. Kate Mondloch alludes to this in her study of the relationship, or 'interface' between viewer and screen installation in a discussion of closed-circuit installations; writing that '...[It] is equally significant that viewers themselves routinely and voluntarily constrain their physical placement in relationship to the camera and screens.'[26] Building on Jonathan Crary's theories concerning the controls exerted by 'technologies of attention' such as the screen, she observes that: 'To the extent that both the screen-based video apparatus and the audience's habits and expectations for the technology literally move viewers in particular ways, the active participation element of these works clearly constitutes a constricted request or demand.'[27] Both Mondloch and Crary refer, however, to the control exerted by the technology itself: its optics, spatial presence and placement, rather than the additional mediation that might exist through the presence of the artist performer beyond the screen and its image. For whilst the artist holds the time and attention of the milling spectators by drawing them into the spectacle of projection and performance, simultaneously they seek to break this bond by employing strategies to destabilise its temporal and spatial hold. With this in mind, Eatherley might thus be seen as an agent of flux, attempting to stir up the settled viewing patterns of *Shot Spread's* milling audience by sonic and performative means.

Annabel Nicolson's 1974 paracinematic work *Doorway* explored the circulation and accumulation of a film audience by exerting a mode of control which played upon spectatorial expectation, and the space of the cinema, in order to inveigle the audience into a covert participation.[28] *Doorway* explored the role of the audience, not as a fixed entity in the durational act of cinematic perception, in thrall to the screen, but by their determining movements in the active process of entering the cinema space itself. Unaware of the nature of the event, in which they were to become the key protagonists, the audience entered the darkened and makeshift cinema at the London Filmmakers' Co-operative at intervals, allowing enough fleeting illumination to enter with them from the stairway outside in order for a reader inside to haltingly recite from the text before them (a text written by Nicolson about the night sky). But once the unwitting spectator crossed the threshold and closed the door, the audience must wait in communal darkness and silence for the next visitor to arrive to let another short-lived shaft of light into the darkened room and thus enable the speaker to continue briefly with their reading.

Nicolson had been exploring for some time the notion of travelling light, and the alchemy of how a projection casts information upon the surfaces it meets, as she observed: 'Light allows information to travel. Projection is essentially transient. The image travels through space and can be arrested at any point on its path.'[29] This had resulted in a number of film performances created for the context of a film screening, but with particular focus on the behaviour and reactions of a participating audience as a reader of the film. In *Precarious Vision* (1973)[30], for example, two volunteers from the audience are invited to read from texts distributed by Nicolson, whilst the same words scroll simultaneously down behind them on the projected screen. Operating the projector, Nicolson would guide the passage and speed of their reading through the use of simple cues: too fast and she would put her hand in front of the projector beam, denying light to the reader until the scrolling film text reached the same point; too slow and she would freeze frame the projection until the reader's recitation had caught up. At the first performance of this participatory work at the ICA in 1973, the controlling role of the artist inherent to the piece came to the fore, as Nicolson recalls how she gave verbal instructions, 'and shouted and walked forward, down the cinema, directing, as if they were actors. "Too fast," or "Too slow", "You'll have to speed up" or "Hold it, you're much too fast."'[31] However, whilst the reader was dependent upon Nicolson for clues, her game of holding back and revelation was designed to help rather than obstruct, for Nicolson perceived the primary concern as 'to do with trust'. This was extended to the relationship between the reader and audience, that the 'audience was on the side of the performer, identifying with their difficulties.'[32]

In this intense exchange between artist, screen and reader a stop-start game of (mis)communication and disruption is initiated, which undermines the homogeneity of the cinematic experience, shifting the breaking down of information from the body of the film material to the body of the reader, and hinting at the inability to grasp the process in hand, both for the viewer and the artist.[33] By materialising the on-screen modes of capture associated to cinema spectatorship, once compellingly theorised by Baudry and Metz[34], into the body of the spectator as inadequate reader, *Precarious Vision* specifically addresses the determinants which shape a spectator's reading of a film by realigning the power positions between viewer and screen. The spectator assumes the role of *actor* – alluding not only to the pro-filmic *action* of the film set, but also to the participatory emphasis of *action* characteristic of art events of the period.[35]

Thus a complex dynamic of power and control unfolds. The actor/reader has agency by structuring the passage of the film event through the speed of their reading. Yet, like a game of blind man's buff, the actor's ability to follow the words on the screen they can't see renders futile their attempt at the control that might be attained through their mastery of language and the act of enunciation[36]. Whilst Nicolson operates the projector in response to the speed and fluency of their reading, she could be seen to play the role of director, as the ICA screening playfully showed. However, I would argue that a more fitting moniker would be conductor, with its etymological reference to *conduit*, as she is alert to the operation of the cues and controls situated in the controls of the projection machine itself. That both Nicolson and the reader are ultimately in thrall to the apparatus of projector and screen might be seen to resonate more deeply still, returning us to Mondloch and Crary's intimations of the power of optical technology[37] to command and structure spectatorial attention.

Doorway, made one year later, also singles out specific readers, whose mastery of their recitation is subject to the unpredictable falling of light upon the page; but now the apportioning of light is reliant upon the audience rather than Nicolson or the projection technology. It could be argued that, like the spectators of Carolee Schneemann's expanded film work *Snows* (1967), whose on-stage performers respond to the signals triggered by the unwitting movements of the audience in their seats, [38] the spectators of *Doorway* do not exercise a conscious desire to control the outcome of the event, so much as they manifest a mobile agency which effects its course. Furthermore, *Doorway* is striking for its emphasis on the agency of the spectatorial body as the register of a slower temporal pace of duration and accumulation, in contrast to the experiential immediacy of the here and now, seen as so paradigmatic of the period's model of spectatorship. The text itself can only be fully concluded by the slow sedimentation of further bodies, as they join their

fellow audience members in the darkened cinema. In an allusion to Kraucauer's cinematic mass, these spectators appear as single agents who must also amass in order to realise the work. Furthermore, mastery of language is undone for the spectator here as it was for the reader of *Precarious Vision*. For *Doorway* denies the possibility of the focused attentiveness associated with listening, insisting instead upon a complex dynamic between memory, readiness and vigilance, as the viewer seeks to catch and hold the errant fragments of text spoken, in an attempt to piece together a complete and coherent piece of writing.

And once over the threshold, the audience at the Co-op cinema are compelled to remain, despite the paucity of the spectacle (a brief snatch of text in a fleeting shaft of light). Like the actor/reader of *Precarious Vision*, we might identify in the inadvertent behaviour of the spectators, as they approach and enter the Co-op cinema, the play of actors as if starring in an unspecified *noir*. Nicolson recalls how: 'It worked particularly well because we were on the third floor there [the "Dairy" at Prince of Wales Crescent] and there was this old stone staircase which you had to climb up, and you could hear people's footsteps so there was a sense of anticipation and suspense as you heard someone stop outside the door. They waited and you knew what was going to happen. Occasionally the footsteps didn't come in… so there was this build-up and then no-one came in.'[39] Through this deceptively simple focus on the unaccounted for space peripheral to the cinema, Nicolson introduced a note of suspense and an intimation of narrative into her paracinematic work, as the audience sat in the darkness awaiting the next entrant and the next line of text, attuned to the sound of approaching footsteps. Here the cinematic captivity of which Baudry once wrote: that mode of over-determined ocularity and attention shaped by the somnambulist comforts of the auditorium and the pull of the on-screen narrative, becomes a game of 'sardines', where each spectator finds and joins fellow spectators in shared initiation. Predicated on the film experience in its absence, *Doorway* functions as a playful yet profound comment on the condition of cinema as a strange game in the dark, in which the spectator is but another actor, participating in a shared narrative, playing out in the space of reception in parallel to the one on the screen. Silently amassed in claustrophobic darkness occasionally penetrated by singular visitations, we are also returned to Reik's observation on how the uncanny significance of 'a fleeting impression, a fleeting presentiment' might open up the 'oppressed minorities of the kingdom of the mind', and thus release memories and reflections to people – a narrative of personal dimensions projected beyond the screen in the mind of the spectator.

Losing Control
Whilst the 'participation and movement' that Iles identifies for the spectator of film and video in the darkened gallery spaces of the 1960s and 1970s is not to

be denied, *Shot Spread* and *Precarious Vision* complicate the question of how far its modes of mobile spectatorship can be seen as truly liberating. They complicate this claim by introducing, along with many other expanded film actions of the period, the competing agency of an authorial presence, mediating the spectator's encounter with an intent both structuring and disorientating, through performances both covert and commanding.

Certainly, as my citation of Mondloch has already argued, the participatory address of much film performance and installation work of the period and since contains a directive to the spectator which could be seen, to quote Balsom, as a 'non-coercive power mechanism'[40], operating a measure of control however implicit and inveigling. But it is important to assert that this exercise of control, however subtle, is not pejorative. Rather, the mediations of sonic mobility, instruction and detainment exercised by Eatherley and Nicolson could be seen to enrich the spectator's reading of the work by drawing attention awry, by directing it away from the screen towards the other factors of control which curtail the so-called liberated movement of the spectator: the dimensions of the room and the other spectatorial bodies milling around them. In this sense they reveal the gallery space as a complex dynamic of power relations, control and mediation differentiated from, but certainly equal to those of the cinema.

In the shift of attention ensuing from Eatherley's proximate movements among the viewers, or in the footsteps and fleeting shaft of light from *Doorway*, I therefore note empowerment rather than a loss of agency. Rooted in time, it liberates through its ability to draw forth profound internal ruminations which go beyond the reawakened awareness of perceptual immediacy sought by Eatherley and her contemporaries, or Osborne's temporal syncopations of spectatorial mobility. Prompted by the artist's mediating provocations, as Reik has observed, a temporal play of memory and experience converge and diverge in dynamic co-existence, to furnish the viewer's reading of the film work with significance beyond its immediate tactile and perambulating reach.

[1] Chrissie Iles (ed.), *Into the Light: The Project Image in American Art 1964 - 1977*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001, p. 33.
[2] Robert Morris, 'Notes on Sculpture, Part I-II' *Artforum*, Vol. 4, No 6, February 1966, p. 42-44; Vol. V, No. 2, October 1966, p. 20-23.
[3] Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen*, London: Intellect, 2009, p. 24.
[4] Volker Pantenburg, '1970 and Beyond: Experimental Cinema and Art Spaces,' in Gertrud Koch, Volker Pantenburg, Simon Rothohler (eds.), *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*, Vienna: Synema Gesellschaft Fur Film und Medien/Filmmuseum, 2012, p. 82.
[5] Matthias Michalka, 'Shoot at the Audience! Projection and Participation in the Late 1960s', in Matthias Michalka (ed.), *X Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*, Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2003, p. 82. The Kriegskunst

Feldzug events are described as including the whipping of the audience, the use of an 'audience extinguisher' by Wolfgang Ernst, balls made of barbed wire being thrown and obscene speeches being held behind barbed wire (see Matthias Michalka, p. 90-102, for a more detailed account and discussion).

[6] Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1998, p. 14.

[7] See Matthias Michalka (ed.), *X Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*, p. 117 for more details about the work.

[8] Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013, p. 53.

[9] See Peter Osborne, 'Distracted Reception: Time, Art and Technology,' in Jessica Morgan, Gregor Muir (eds.), *Time Zones, Recent Film and Video*, London: Tate Publishing, 2004, p. 66-75.

[10] Balsom's thorough synthesis of the varying theoretical and curatorial positions pertaining to mobile spectatorship also qualifies the claim by Baudry and other apparatus theorists for the auditorium's removal of stimuli (see Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, p. 50-53).

[11] My description of the work relates to a restaging of the piece at the Oil Tanks space at Tate Modern in October 2012.

[12] Gill Eatherley, email correspondence with Lucy Reynolds, 1st March 2013.

[13] *Idem.*

[14] For more detailed information about the activities of the British expanded cinema movement of the 1970s, and in particular the Filmaktion events of 1973, see Lucy Reynolds, 'Filmaktion: New Directions in Film-Art,' in Christoph Grunenberg, Robert Knifton (eds.), *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde,* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007.

[15] Gill Eatherley, interview with Lucy Reynolds, December 2008.

[16] Michel Chion, *Audio Visual: Sound on Screen*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 70.

[17] See Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, p. 50-53, for a thorough synthesis of the different theoretical positions concerning mobile spectatorship: from *flânerie* to window shopping.

[18] Theodor Reik, *Surprise and the Psycho-analyst on the Conjecture and Comprehension of Unconscious Processes*, London: K Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1936, trans. MM Green, p. 52.

[19] Theodor Reik, *Surprise and the Psycho-analyst on the Conjecture and Comprehension of Unconscious Processes*, p. 54-55.

[20] Theodor Reik, p. 49.

[21] Theodor Reik, p. 52.

[22] Theodor Reik, p. 49.

[23] For the paradigmatic definition of the 'white cube' space engendered by modernism, see Brian O'Doherty's influential series of three articles first published in *Artforum* in 1976 (*Inside the White Cube, The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Santa Monica/San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1986).

[24] Peter Osborne, 'Distracted Reception: Time, Art and Technology,' p. 69.

[25] Peter Osborne, p. 73.

[26] Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art*, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 34.

[27] Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art*, p. 34. I am indebted to Erika Balsom's citation of Mondloch in *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, for reminding me of Mondloch's assertions concerning control and participation in relation to the screen, as there is little sustained writing on this subject that I am aware of elsewhere.

[28] The work *Doorway* is discussed in the past tense, since it was conceived for the context of the London Filmmakers' Co-operative cinema during its phase at the old Dairy on Prince of Wales Crescent. It was last performed there in 1974.

[29] Annabel Nicolson, Paul Burwell, 'A Reciprocal Lesson', [unpublished], 1975, Study Collection archive.

[30] *Precarious Vision* was first performed in London at the ICA alongside *Reel Time* and *Jaded Vision* as part of the International Festival of Independent Avant-Garde Film.

[31] Annabel Nicolson, 'Annabel Nicolson at the Co-op' (collected interviews), *Light Years: A Twenty Year Celebration of the LFMC*, LFMC leaflet, Oct/Nov 1986, p. 43.

[32] Annabel Nicolson, Interview with Lucy Reynolds, March 2009.

[33] My experience of the work relates to a restaging of it, which I attempted in March 2013 at Camden Arts Centre, London. I followed the instructions of Nicolson, who discussed it at length with me before the event, although she was not able to orchestrate it herself.

[34] The apparatus theories expounded by Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz, amongst others, have become seen as a paradigmatic theorisation of the control exerted by the conditions of the cinema and its apparatus. For further explication, see Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

[35] This could be related to 'the cultural process ('performance', 'happening') rather than the fixed product,' which Stuart Laing notes as 'a central feature of much would-be revolutionary culture of the decade.' (Stuart Laing, 'The Politics of Culture: Institutional Change,' in Bart Moore-Gilbert, John Seed (eds.), *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge to the Arts in the 1960s*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 90).

[36] A fruitful discussion could be made of this work through a semiotic reading, particularly in relation to the writings of Helene Cixous. However, this is outside the scope of this current essay.

[37] Crary uses Thomas Edison as an example of how 'an attentive subject' might be constructed through technology within modern Capitalism, writing of how he saw 'the marketplace in terms of how images, sounds, energy, or information could be reshaped into measureable distributable commodities and how a social field of individual subjects could be arranged into increasingly separate and specialized units of consumption.'(Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, p. 31.)

[38] For further information about *Snows,* see Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy: Performances and Selected Writings*, New York: Documentext, McPherson and Company, 2000 and Lucy Reynolds, 'Material Equations in the Work of Carolee Schneemann and Annabel Nicolson,' in Bridget Crone (ed.), *The Sensible Stage: Staging and the Moving Image*, Bristol: Picture This publications, 2012.

[39] Annabel Nicolson quoted from interview with Felicity Sparrow, Luxonline (www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/doorway.html).

[40] Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, p. 53.