A thesis submitted to the original

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SELFATHER

by

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A thesis submitted to the

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Department of Art and Art History

2007

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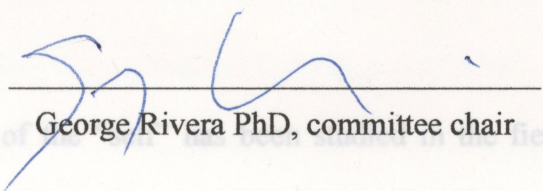
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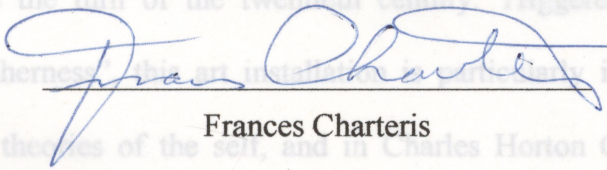
Department of Art and Art History

2007

This thesis entitled:
Self / Other

written by Isabel Rivero-Marshall

has been approved for the department of Art and Art History

_____
George Rivera PhD, committee chair

Frances Charteris

Date 04/17/2007

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

Rivero-Marshall, Isabel M. (M.F.A., Department of Art and Art History)

Self/Other

Thesis directed by Professor George Rivera, PhD.

The concept of the "self" has been studied in the fields of sociology and psychology since the turn of the twentieth century. Triggered by my status of immigrant or "otherness", this art installation is particularly interested in Jung's psychoanalytical theories of the self, and in Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead's sociological theories of the self on symbolic interaction.

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Special thanks to:

God for illuminating my way, and for my new light.

My dear husband and companion for all the unconditional help, support, and love.

George Rivera my advisor, mentor, and inspiration for making it possible.

Frances Charteris for bringing me here and for your friendship.

Luis Valdovino, for a sea of knowledge and your friendship.

Yumi Roth for all the critics I'll never forget.

Thank you all, thank you.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Self and "other" are intimately related concepts. From psychological and sociological perspectives to our daily experiences and interactions, one can perceive how self and other are interdependent, mutually constructed entities. In certain areas of psychology and sociology the "other" is anyone who surrounds the self, a person. By examining the sociological framework of Mead and Cooley, and psychological theories of Freud and Jung, I hope to lay a theoretical foundation for my art installation *Self/Other*.

My particular interest in this topic started after I immigrated to the United States. It is true we all are other to someone else's eyes, but when you are in a new culture your status as other becomes more evident. In sociology, symbolic interactionists believe that by recognizing differences and similarities between your self and the other you can have an idea of the self. As an immigrant, I feel it is easier to find dissimilarities than similarities between my self and the rest of the people who surround me. In fact, my unconscious, or what Jung calls the shadow, gets more active in a sense. After a few years, parts of my behavior have had to be pushed back or repressed into my shadow because they could not be a part of my daily life in this foreign society.

I believe in the power of art as a medium to communicate ideas that go beyond beauty; therefore, art became my tool for understanding the self. Inspired in conceptual art by the idea, in performance art by its element in the video and the viewer, and video art by the power of the moving image, *Self/Other* is an art installation that I have created with the intention of immersing the viewer in a self-search journey that instigates an understanding of the self through the other.

Self-awareness has been a critical issue in the history of thought. Many different fields have studied the "self" in an attempt to understand it and to learn how it is constructed; yet we are still studying this area. From Thales of Miletus to Socrates and Lao Tse, they have all agreed that the most difficult task in life is "To Know Thyself." Its difficulty is immeasurable; to study the self as a whole we have to study all its parts, the conscious and the unconscious. The area of the unconscious is obscure; we do not have a way of communicating with it. Absurdly enough, the only way to learn about the nature and functioning of our unconscious is through our conscious because this is how we humans work. Lao Tse says in the *Tao Te Ching* that "knowing 'others' is wisdom but knowing the self is enlightenment."[1] This absolutely shakes the base of our structure of beliefs because the only thing we thought to be sure about is suddenly taken away from us. If we think that we might know our self better than the other, we might want to think again.

Art has been involved in the exploration of the self as much as any other field. Consciously or unconsciously the collaboration by surrealist artists was

[1] C. Elorduy Ed., *Tao Te Ching*, : (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1983)

CHAPTER II

THE SELF

CONSTRUCTION OF THE "SELF" THROUGH THE "OTHER"

Self-awareness has been a critical issue in the history of thought. Many different fields have studied the "self" in an attempt to understand it and to learn how it is constructed; yet we are still studying this area. From Thales of Miletus to Socrates and Lao Tse, they have all agreed that the most difficult task in life is "To Know Thyself." Its difficulty is immeasurable; to study the self as a whole we have to study all its parts, the conscious and the unconscious. The area of the unconscious is obscure; we do not have a way of communicating with it. Absurdly enough, the only way to learn about the nature and functioning of our unconscious is through our conscious because this is how we humans work. Lao Tse says in the *Tao Te Ching* that "knowing 'others' is wisdom but knowing the self is enlightenment."[1] This absolutely shakes the base of our structure of beliefs because the only thing we thought to be sure about is suddenly taken away from us. If we think that we might know our self better than the other, we might want to think again.

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[1] C. Elorduy Ed., *Tao Te Ching*, : (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1983)

immeasurable. For example, Salvador Dali's subjects were his dreams and his unconscious, and he used art as a tool to bring to them to life. In video and installation art we have seen Bruce Nauman's *Performance Corridor*. This installation featured two monitors at the end of an enclosed narrow corridor and a camera that recorded yourself from behind, so while you got closer to the monitor at the end of the corridor all you saw was the back of yourself walking away from yourself. This piece shifts the viewer's point of view playing with perception in a similar way that *Self/Other* does. In *Performance Corridor* and in *Self/Other*, viewers have no control in how they look at themselves. We are used to looking at ourselves in a mirror, straight into our eyes, so *Performance Corridor* and *Self/Other*, both make the viewer look at him or herself as we look at the other.

The Personal

My immigrant background had an immense impact on how I look at others and how I look at my own self. I started questioning what constitutes the self and what makes us the way we are because for once I was undoubtedly different. Even language, which is a basic element of communication, became a barrier. This is how my interest in analyzing people started. I had to pay close attention to different symbols that were thrown at me during a conversation to try to make sense of a situation. These different symbols place people at a specific hierarchy in relationship to one another or communicate something that arises between the sender and the receiver of that message. The vehicle for these symbols can be the location of a situation (e.g. a doctor's office) or elements such as the way people are dressed and their body language, among others.

While being an outsider is my nature to study and analyze people, but naturally, after not too long, I also turned inward in a psychological search for my self but in relationship to the other --the other being anyone who was not what I called the "I" or "self." I started thinking about what the people around me had to do with who I am.

As an immigrant I felt the different levels of otherness one can assume inside a society. I felt much more the "otherness" of ethnicity, language, culture, and body language. All these elements in my self were different from the average other in the United States. For example, it is well known that being more physical is a big part of the Latin culture, but here is not very well accepted and even less in a professional setting such as a university. If you hug someone you appreciate, a third person can go to the sexual harassment office and file a complaint. These experiences go far beyond the experiences I had while growing up. Therefore, I felt I had to pay close attention to what these experiences were causing in my self, and to what extent I was responsible for the growth of my own *shadow*. I believe the shadow to be an ever-growing part of our self, not a consequence of childhood repression only as Freud claims. An immigrant is like a child, he or she has to learn how to live and be part of a society without becoming what Erving Goffman calls a "stigmatized individual." A stigmatized individual is one who is not socially accepted or someone who does not posses great self-worth in relationship to other "normal" people. Immigrants go through a process of adaptation where the self is in more constant flux than what Levinas ever imagined.[2] The new things that the

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[2] To Levinas the self is ever changing with every encounter with the other. At the same time we will never be able to know anything about the other.

environment teaches you are absorbed by the ego or conscious and some subliminal ones are absorbed by the shadow or unconscious. I will expand on this topic on chapter III and IV.

Theoretical Foundations

The main sources for my artistic theoretical foundation are psychological and sociological theories on the construction of the self. The theories I focused on are the ones suggesting that the self is constructed through the "other," this being anyone other than the self. Since the turn of the nineteenth century, the concept of self as a construction by the other has been studied by psychiatrists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, as well as by sociologists Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead, among many others. This group of theorists from psychology and sociology shared the study of the self as a common ground; the difference between the two fields was and still is the outcome. Sociologists believe that through the study of the self they can create awareness, and therefore, positive changes in society, but psychologists believe they can help society only by controlling or repressing the self that is not adapted to its surroundings. Being aware of the differences between these two fields is part of what informs my creative process.

I do not think of the self as a construction of the outside uniquely but I also believe in the outside as a construction of the self. We project the society we live in, and, at the same time, the society we live in reflects the individuals who conform to it. Jung wrote once, "the inner voice brings to consciousness whatever the whole – whether the nation to which we belong or humanity to which we are part- suffers

from. But it presents evil in an individual form, so that at first we would suppose all this evil to be only a trait of individual character."[3]

Our self is constructed through the other, and yet, our relationship with others depends on how much we know about ourselves. The lack of understanding of the self as a whole can affect our experience of the world. The way we perceive others can be blinded or altered. Our relationship with others can be affected. Xenophobia or our fear towards the other can be caused just by our lack of self-knowledge, but in that sense, how can we reject in one way or another the other if we don't even know ourselves? Where does our rejection come from? This is where the Jungian concept of the *shadow* comes into play.

The shadow is a concept that Jung proposed after reading about Freud's concept of the unconscious. Jung felt that the unconscious was not formed only by the repression of childhood tendencies. He thought of it as a thing on its own, the base of our conscious, and a part of our whole self that was obscure and hard to get to. "It is the network of half or totally forgotten impressions and reactions, of partially realized or wholly suppressed emotions, of critically rejected thoughts and feelings."[4] The shadow is the result of our life experiences, and it can be so far deep into our psychic structure that the only way of communication it has is through our dreams, jokes, and talents we never knew we had. Jungian analyst Liliane Frey-Rohn states that the shadow should not be associated uniquely with the dark side of human nature because it also includes "emotional attachments, infantile parts,

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[3] J. Abrams Ed. And C. Zweig Ed., *Meeting the Shadow*, (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1991), XVI-XXV.
[4] V. Staud De Laszlo Ed., *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, New York: The Modern Library, 1959

neurotic symptoms, as well as our undeveloped talents and gifts."[5] The importance of reaching deep in our unconscious is in the individuation process to which "Jung refers as the 'spontaneous realization of the whole person'."[6]

Furthermore, one of my takes on Jung and Freud is that the different reactions that others trigger in you might help you understand what is in your subconscious and conscious, and perceive what you really are as a whole. To fully understand these reactions we can reach a deeper understanding of one's shadow and therefore of one's self as a whole. According to Jung, some reactions we have towards others such as disliking someone without explanation and jokes about others can be the reflection of our unconscious, our *shadow*. When we dislike someone's behavior it might be because it is part of our own *shadow* and is repressed or because it is just a neurotic symptom of our *shadow*. So when looking at the other we should analyze what we feel and why, not just give an opinion without looking into our selves first. We must work to meet our *shadow* and in this way we can "recognize the projections that color our opinions of others, and achieve a more genuine self-acceptance." Based on a complete knowledge of who we are, we will feel freer of guilt and shame associated with our negative feelings and actions.[7]

One might ask then, how can we understand or learn about our own self? One way to understand our self is through others. According to Cooley, "the individual gains a stable view of self by seeing how others view him or her."[8]

[5] J. Abrams Ed. And C. Zweig Ed., *Meeting the Shadow,* Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles: California, 1991
[6] V. Staud De Laszlo Ed., *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung,* New York: The Modern Library, 1959
[7] Idle
[8] B. Adams and R.A. Sydie, *Sociological Theory*, (California: Pine Forge Press, 2001), 312-313

Through others we have the ability to position ourselves not only inside a social hierarchy but to see our self. The other's actions, their way of speaking, their body language, and the way they look at us, can inform us who we are to them. We can tell when someone is looking down on us, or when someone is speaking to us with respect. We probably speak different to our friends than we do to a doctor in the doctor's office, or to a mortgage agent in a bank when we go to get a home loan. We can feel the impression they might have of us (self-feeling), and this is one way we start building our self. We imagine how they look at us and the worth we have to them; this is how we create a sense of self-feeling.

Information that determines who the other person is, or even who we are, is silently present through our personal appearance. Personal appearances are symbols that identify us as us, such as our posture, facial expression, clothing, race, gender, and age. "These symbols are read constantly through encounters with others."[9] In the same way situations can be read, people can be read. In this same way a person can read another person by how they dress, how they stand, and what their facial expression is. In the other we may see similarities and differences in relationship to our self. This similarities and differences can help us construct our self as well. For example, I am not white, I am tall, I am not fat, and I am skinny.

According to Thomas Alley, facial appearance is the most important physical attribute in determining how we see, think and feel about others. "The face can reflect attitudes and intentions; it is the source of verbal communication and the chief bodily area associated with the expression of emotions and individual identity"

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[9] G. P. Stone and H. A. Farberman, *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction*, 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1981), 6-8.

playing the most important role in aesthetic judgments, and social perception.[10] Facial appearance, as well as other physical characteristics, can affect the individual's behavior anytime they are in front of the other.

With *Self/Other* I bring all these theories together under the language of art to create an environment that intends to drive the viewer to think about the construction of the self through the other. Sociological and psychological theories of the self have assisted in my creative process, and I have used art and its aesthetics qualities to communicate ideas that go beyond the aesthetically appealing. Art is a language that can be utilized to communicate theories from any discipline. It has no limitations because the visual surpasses any written documents. Furthermore, in this specific case the medium is Installation Art, which has endless possibilities because it is utilizing the visual element in an immersive manner. The more the viewer is immersed into an environment the more vivid that experience becomes and when we add experience to the visual language that is the closest we get to real life. We learn not only through pictures or books but also through our experiences in this world. These experiences involves the senses at their fullest in time and space. We see the world, feel it, smell it, hear it, taste it, and have it all around us because it exists in a three-dimensional manner. It surrounds us, just like installation art does.

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[10] T. R. Alley Ed., Social and Applied Aspects of Perceiving Faces, (New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988) 1-8

CHAPTER III

SELF/OTHER: The Art Installation

Influenced by conceptual art, performance art, video art, sociology, and psychology of the "self" and the other, this installation is created with the intention of immersing the viewer in a journey of self-search through the other. The space is expected to transform the viewer's museum experience into something other than white walls and commodities. The viewer is the main element in the installation because the space has been constructed with the viewer's shadow, movement, and reaction in mind. The role of the viewer is essential in the completion of the piece. The Japanese poet Yone Noguchi (1874-1947) said once that "it is the readers who make the haiku's[11] imperfection a perfection of art." As Japanese haiku and conceptual art, in *Self/Other* it is the viewer who makes the art's imperfection a perfection of art.

The art installation *Self/Other* includes an introductory space or preparation chamber, and two rooms of equal size. Duality is a very important element throughout the whole installation. The installation evokes a sense of balance since it is symmetrically divided it by a wall. I'll refer to these two different rooms as space A and space B (see fig 1). This equal division represents the importance that the

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[11] Style of short Japanese poetry

other has in the construction of the self by giving to the other the same weight we give to the "self."

All spaces or rooms have been painted black because they represent the darkness of our shadow, our unconscious. In real life our shadow cannot be seen but this space is a visual representation of the impossible. The viewers will be able to experience the light of their conscious inside the darkness of their own shadow. The little light in the introductory space and the light that is projected through the videos onto the walls of space A and space B represent the conscious. The space has been created to trigger an honest communication with ourselves.

All the spaces have the same sound. It is a meditative sound in which I hold the same key E on the piano for 20 minutes. Through meditation one can get rid of ego, and with this, all previous experiences. My intention is to get the viewer immersed in the experience of self-search without being too distracted with the outside world. The sound has also a back sound of waves. Water represents our deepest memory, back in our mother's uterus. It also represents the immensity of the ocean, which has been compared with the unconscious. The water of the ocean creates life, but its immensity, darkness, and depth scares us.

Fig. 1. Graphic, Installation Self / Other, 2007

III.1. PREPARATION CHAMBER / INTRODUCTORY SPACE

The preparation chamber or introductory space will prepare the viewer for their journey into the installation. The change from light to dark is dramatic in the space so the viewer needs to adjust his/her eyes for a few steps before entering space A. The preparation chamber is a dark hallway with white text on a black wall. At the end of the hallway I place a very small light to guide them in this journey (see fig. 2).
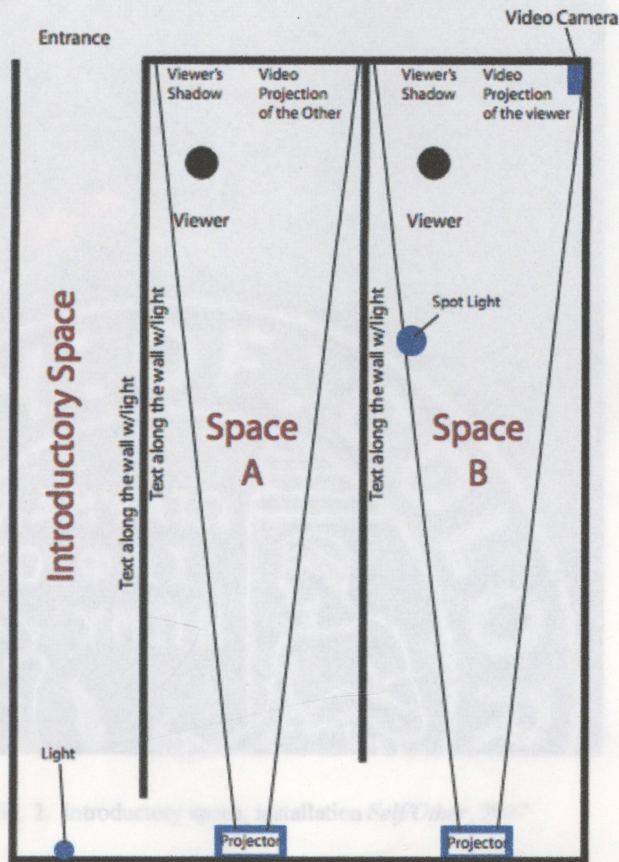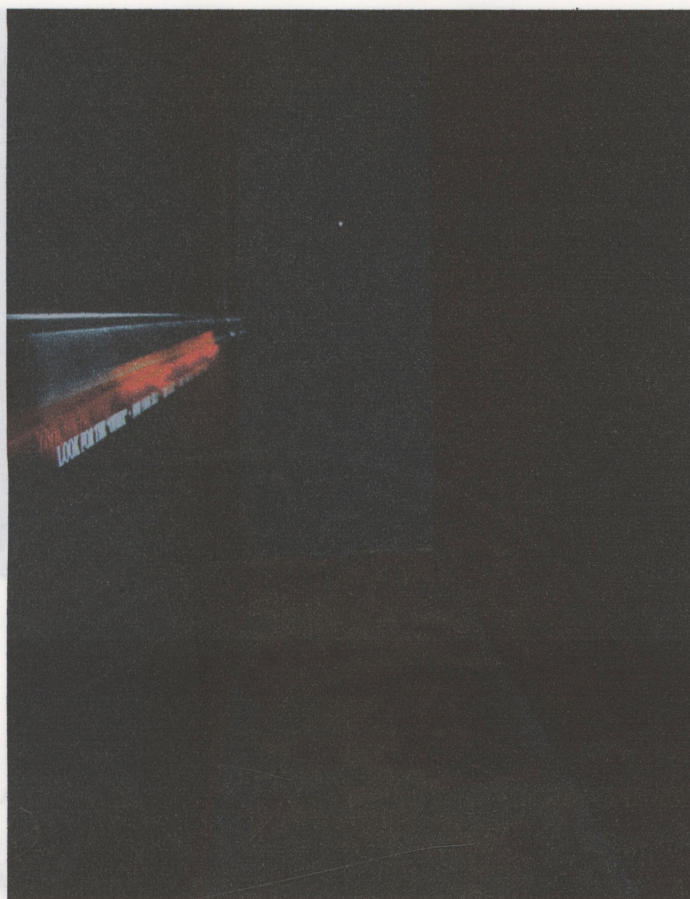
Fig. 2. Introductory space, installation *Self/Other*, 2007

The light represents the light of the viewer's conscious, which is what drives her/him in this search. The text on the wall is composed in one line that goes along half of the length of the hallway. This will make the viewer walk inside the room. The white text on the wall reads "LOOK FOR THE other • FIND YOUR SELF • THE LIGHT • YOUR CONSCIOUS • ASSISTS THE SEARCH" (see fig. 3). The text prepares the viewer for a search that will start by looking for the other but what happens is that they will find their self. The text explains that the light is their conscious, which will assist and drive them in this search.
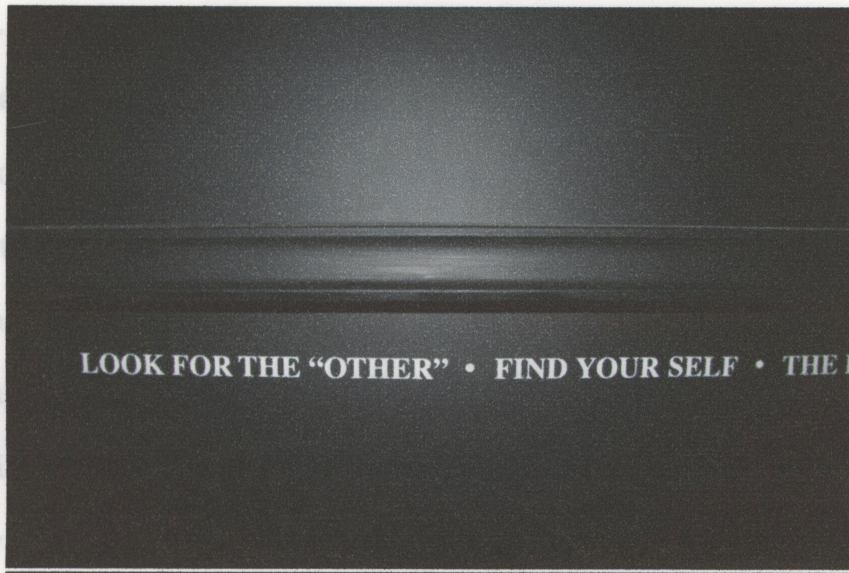
Fig. 3. Detail of text, introductory space, installation Self/Other, 2007

III.2. SPACE A

On SPACE *A*, the main components are text on the wall, a video projection of the other, and the viewer with his/her shadow (see fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Space A, installation Self/Other, 2007

III.2.1. The Text. The text on space A has two main purposes. First and most importantly, once the viewer enters the space, the text has the task of driving the viewer to get closer to the other's projection, or to the wall the video is being projected onto. This happens unconsciously while they are reading because the text goes from the closest point on the left side wall to the farthest point of the left side wall. Without realizing it, the viewer is walking towards the other. Since we are used to reading text (from left to right), if there is text [that is not long] people have the tendency to go ahead and read it. The same happens when while watching TV some unexpected text pops up along the bottom of your screen, or when you sit down to eat in a table that happens to have a newspaper on it. It is our nature to read if there is text because we have been brought up in a learning system that is based mainly on text. The typeface I chose was *Times New Roman* because it is broadly used in prints such as magazines newspapers, and books. It has credibility in its shape because it is a typeface with serif and kern. The action of reading the text will take the viewer closer to the projection of the other. She will be placed face to face with the projection of the other and also with her own shadow.

Second, the text is the synthesis of my creative process because it poetically summarizes what there is to understand about space A. All the information I have learned and my personal opinions regarding this topic have been filtered in such a way for the viewer that can fit in one line: "REACH • CONSTRUCT YOUR SELF • DEFINE YOUR SELF • FACE THE 'OTHER' • YOUR SHADOW • THE UNCONSCIOUS • CLOSER TO THE 'OTHER' • CLOSER TO YOUR SELF." (see Fig.5).
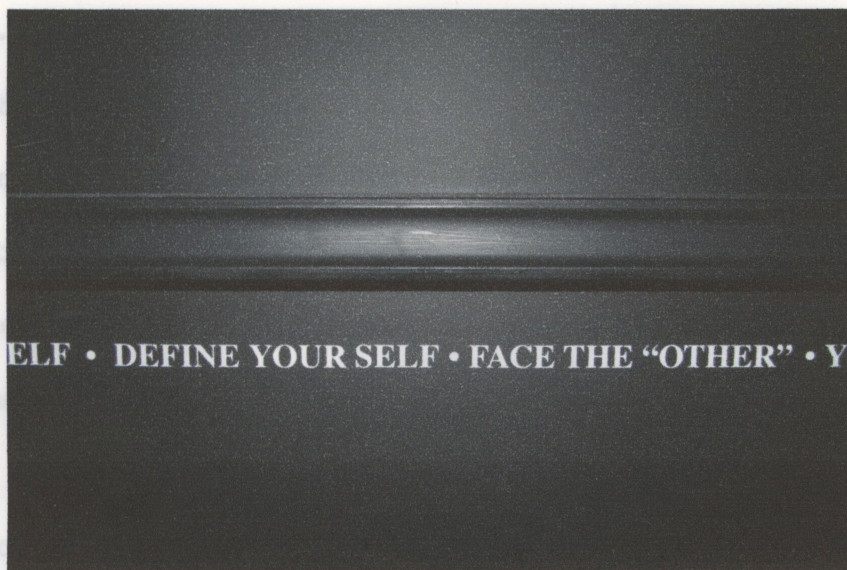
ELF • DEFINE YOUR SELF • FACE THE "OTHER" • YC

Fig. 5. Detail of text on space A, installation Self/Other, 2007

Haiku, a style of short Japanese poetry, has in a way inspired this concise form of writing, but the main influence was my own experience as an immigrant. When writing in the English language I have always written in this way. By separating each small word, phrase, or sentence I am empowering each word in relationship to one another. The significance of the phrase is much more powerful than when we put it inside a long sentence. Each word is delivering their meaning without being overpowered by the whole text. "Reach" speaks about walking forward, making a physical effort to get to someone or something. Then the viewer will "Construct" her self, and "define" her self while looking at the other. The other is not only the people on the video projection but also their own "shadow," which at the same time is their "unconscious." The "closer" the viewer gets to the "other," while reading the text, the "closer" they are getting to their whole "self."

III.2.2. The Video: The other. My aim with the video is to bring into the room the presence of the other. For the video I shot people around the art building as well as people from the area of Boulder. I made an effort to compensate for the demographics of the area of Boulder, which is mainly white, in an attempt to bring a more balanced demographics to the experience. In the video we can find Chicanos, African-Americans, Africans, Latinos, White, Asian, Europeans, and people from the Middle East. There are also people from different classes, genders, ages, religious backgrounds, and groups. With this variety of subjects the experience of the installation becomes more equally for the different viewers we can get during the show. All viewers are able to find both differences and similarities between themselves and the subjects.

In the video the subjects became both the performer and the observer. In one way or another, they were "performing," a term E. Goffman used to refer to "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his/her continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers."[12] The subjects in this video are to some extent "performing" because we are always performing when we are around other people. Our "performance" changes depending on the situation and on the people we are surrounded by. In this case, the performer was not around anyone besides my self (the artist), but they were able to look at themselves on a TV monitor that was showing what the camera was recording. I did not look at them but they did see themselves in the TV screen making them an observer as well as a performer. Consequently, the different

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[12] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 17-27.

reactions I got from most of the subjects were involved with the appreciation of their own self because that is who they were looking at.

The subjects were asked to step into the frame, stop in the middle for thirty seconds, and then walk out of the frame in the opposite direction they entered from. This gives enough time for the viewer to truly look at the person on the projection. The viewer can read all the different symbols presented with each subject, such as clothing, posture, look, race, social class, and more. Throughout the thirty seconds, the subjects stayed inside the frame (see fig. 6).
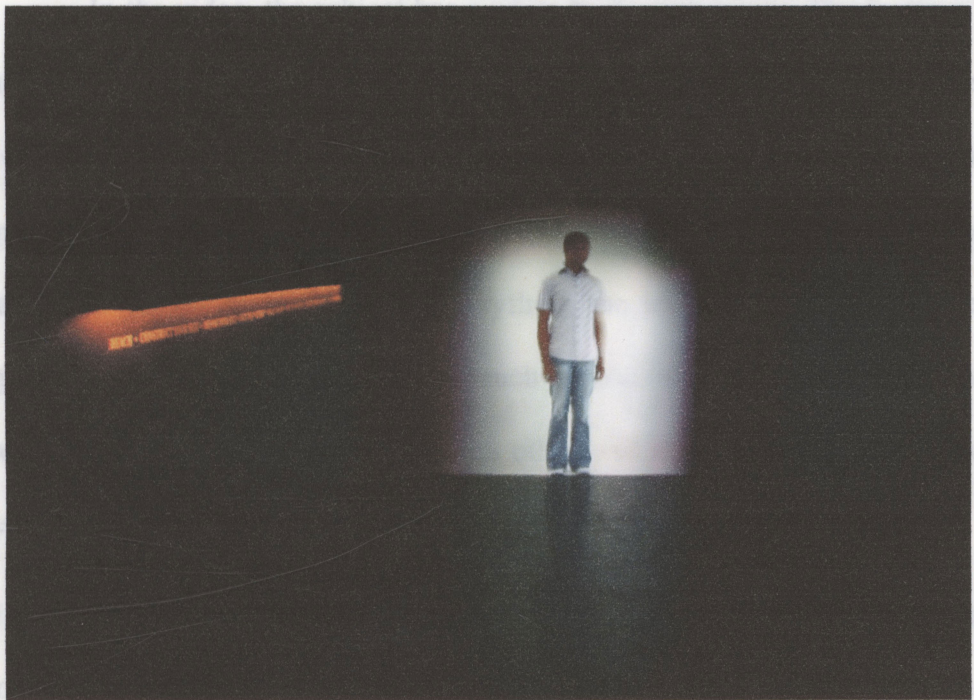

Fig. 6. Space A, Video Projection of the other, Self/Other, 2007

The sense of self can be acquired through how others look at you. This social self is what Cooley defined as the "looking-glass self." You construct your self partially from what you think people think of you. One way to have a feel of

how people look at you is through symbols of communication (during an interaction) such as posture, "gesture, voice, and the written symbols which are presented through ages."[13] "You can also imagine what the person in front of you thinks of you, or how they are judging your appearance, making you feel pride or mortification."[14] For this reason, I (the artist) didn't confront the participants by looking at them while they were on camera hoping to achieve a more "personal" view of the self. I was not projecting at that moment. I was not being a mirror to them, the camera or the TV was.

In the video, the subject has a white background only. The "setting", involving anything that surrounds the subject, has been removed, so the viewer focuses on the subject without having any extra influence on their appreciation of the other. The only element influencing their experience is what Goffman calls the "personal front." The personal front is everything the individual takes wherever he/she goes. It constitutes "intimate items" such as bodies and their clothing, and these are vehicles for conveying signs.[15] The other will make assumptions of our self only by the way we are dressed, hairstyle, and characteristics of our bodies.

In an attempt to create equal power in the self-other relationship, the projection will show the other as close as it can to its real size. In this case, size matters. If the other is shown to be smaller than their appearance in real life, then the viewer will gain a position of authority or power. On the other hand, if the image of the other is bigger it can be overpowering. For this reason, I keep the size of the

[13] C. H. Cooley, *Sociological Theory and Social Research*, (New York: Henry Holt 1930), 297-99.
[14] C. H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, Philip Reiff Ed., (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1902/1983a.) 135
[15] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 17-27.

other as close as it can get to its real size.

III.3.3. The Viewer: The Shadow. The viewer on space A can take his/her time to look at the other and identify him/herself in comparison to the other. While looking at the other the viewer will utilize symbols to define him/herself. A symbol is the significance or value of anything that was given to it by man. A symbol can be a color, clothing, race, pose, movement, or even a look (see fig. 4).[16]

The viewer's actions are strongly influenced by being part of a bigger crowd in a specific space; for this reason the viewer is instructed to enter one at a time. It is an individualistic journey for the search of the viewer's self in relationship to the other. Le Bon's "crowds psychology" has studied how crowds condition the subject's actions. These actions determines behaviors and reactions that a subject can have in front of the other and can vary significantly when he or she feels the sense of belonging with a group.

Instantly, the viewer forms a hierarchy and their position in front of the other will be dependent upon identification of race, color, economic condition, sex, age, and religion among others. The conscious or unconscious identification of these elements place us in a different or similar place in respect to the other. The viewer's social stereotypes come into play to identify themselves. Given that Boulder, Colorado is an area with a demographic predominantly white, any white person who stands in front of the projection will feel he/she is backed up by the people outside

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[16] As John Locke said, symbols have their signification…from the arbitrary imposition of man and we understand these through signs and after the relationship has been established. Once the relationship has been established between sound and response, the meaning of the stimulus becomes identified with its physical form and is, therefore, perceivable with the senses."

[17] Anthony Stevens, *Freud and Jung*, Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 48.

of the museum offering perhaps a position of authority in relationship to the other.

The **viewer's shadow** is inevitably cast on the wall where the video is being projected. The projector is placed behind the viewer, at a height and in a place that will make it impossible for the viewer not to cast a shadow (see fig. 7). The shadow is the representation of what Jung referred to as the shadow or the unconscious. According to Freud, the unconscious contains our repressed "infantile tendencies," and we can learn about our unconscious through our dreams. When we dream, we lose the conscious control and will over our thoughts. Thus there is an open room for the repressed unconscious to surface. In Jungian psychology the shadow is part of our unconscious. Containing not only our repressed tendencies, but also formed by subliminal sense perceptions, this is everything our brain detects but not our conscious. "There is usually something alien or hostile about the shadow which gives rise to powerful feelings of distrust, anger and fear."[17] From this distrust and fear comes xenophobia (fear towards the other), a part of our everyday life experiences society. The persona and the shadow are two separate elements that live together trying to find a balance for our selves.

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[17] Anthony Stevens, *Freud and Jung*, Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 48.

Fig. 7. Space A, installation Self/Other, 2007

The size of the viewer's shadowed reflect depends on a conscious or unconscious decision of the viewer. Everything depends on where he or she will locate him/herself. The scale and clarity of their shadow varies with their positioning inside the space. This element turns *Self/Other* into an ever-changing piece. The viewer changes constantly as the viewer moves around the space. It is up to the viewer to make their shadow the size of the other or bigger offering the chance to bring balance into the self (the viewer's self).

III.3. SPACE B

On SPACE *B* the main elements are the text on the wall, a spot light, a video camera, the live feed projection, and the viewer and his/her shadow.

III.3.1 The Text. As in space A my intention with the text is to drive the viewer from point "a" to point "b" (see p. 14 for further information). Still the text is white on a black wall. The viewer enters the space and starts reading the text on the left wall. This will take him/her towards the front where a spot light is waiting for them. The spot light will illuminate the viewer so they can be shot by a camera that is placed in the room. The text says, "EMBRACE THE other • YOUR SHADOW • LOOK AT THE 'OTHER' • YOUR SELF • THE 'OTHER'…" With this text, I suggest that the viewer must embrace their entire self including their shadow. By looking at themselves from new perspective they can appreciate themselves in the same way they do others. They are the other (see fig. 8).
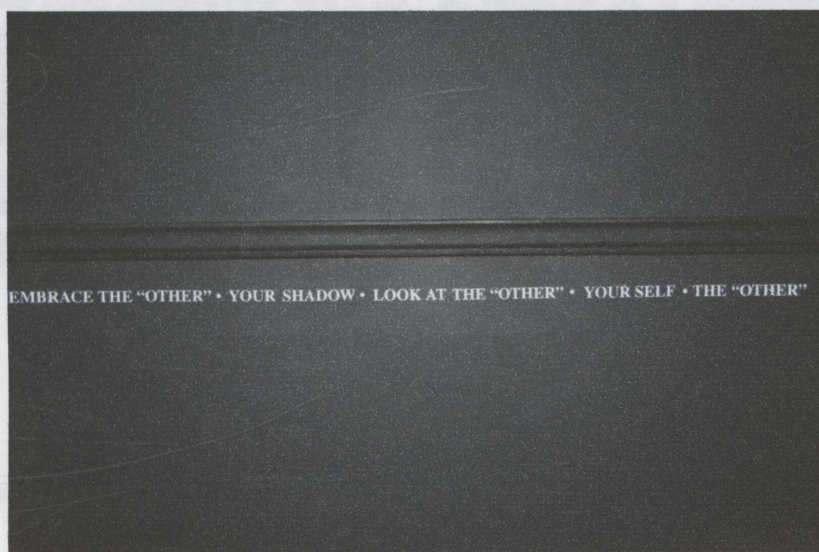

Fig. 8. Detail of text, side B, installation *Self/Other*, 2007

III.3.2 The Video: The Other. The text ends where the spot light is (see fig 8), the light illuminates the viewer while a camera is sending a real-time (live) feed of the image of the viewer standing. When we go to a store with electronics such as

Best Buy or CompUSA, and we direct ourselves to the video camera department, we can see our own selves in a TV monitor -a technique they use to show the quality of the camera's image-. This is exactly what is happening in space B but in an absolutely different context. The viewer is looking at him/herself on the video projection.
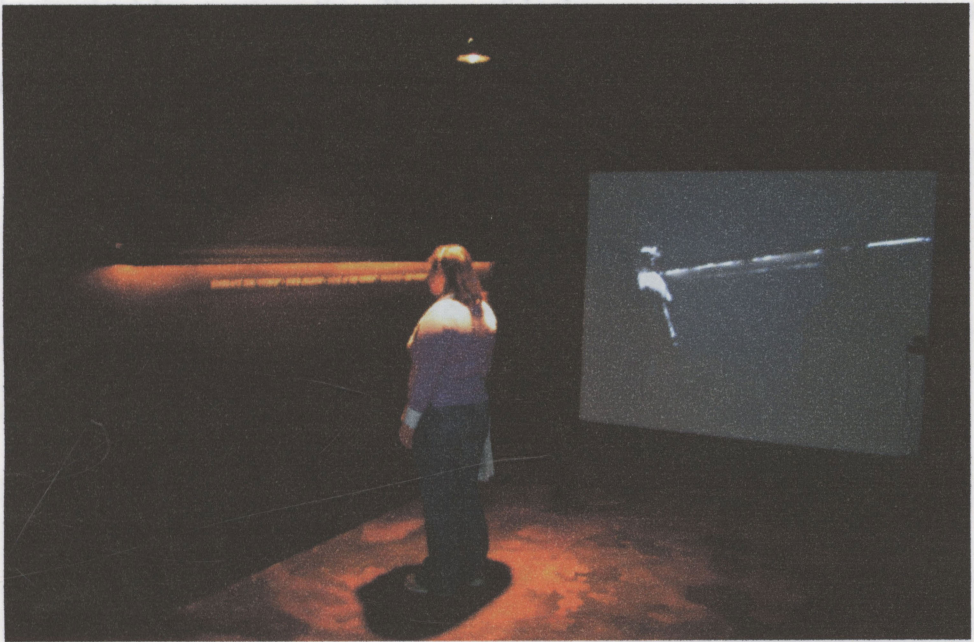

Fig. 9. Space B, installation *Self/Other*, 2007

The important factor is that the viewer won't be able to look at him/herself directly into the eyes. If the viewer is looking straight into the camera he/she cannot look at their own image; yet if they look at their own image it will be as looking at the other because you will never be able to look at yourself the way you do when you use a mirror (see fig. 10). For centuries the mirror has been the medium we humans utilize to looking at our selves, so we are used to looking at ourselves straight. By placing the camera on an angle the aim is to shift the viewer's point of

view, making it impossible for the viewer to look at his or her own selves straight into the eyes (as when looking at ourselves in the mirror). I am changing the viewer's perception of his or her own self. By manipulating perception I hope to achieve a change the way they look and understand their self. I intend to create an unusual way of looking at ourselves by emulating the way we look at others on a regular basis. And by creating this illusion of looking at ourselves as we look at others, my aim is to force the viewer to *be* the other.

Fig. 10. Space B, installation *Self/Other*, 2007

III.3.3 The Viewer: The Shadow. The viewer's shadow is also present on space B (for more detail turn to page 18). The difference between space A and space B is that the viewer is present by absence with the shadow, but at the same time is present through the video. Their shadow shows a reflection of the self that is

different from the projection on the wall (see fig. 9). The angle is different and yet is the same person that is being projected onto the same wall. The viewer is invited to see themselves as the other and their shadow at the same time. In this way he or she can embrace their whole self.

Depending on the viewer's movement and interaction with the space he/she can make his/her shadow overlap with his/her projection. This is a representation of what happens to us in our daily lives. Sometimes our shadow or unconscious surfaces overpowering the conscious and other times it is our conscious that drives us without paying attention to our shadow: our deepest desires, repressions, and unknown talents.

IV. CONCLUSION

Through the art installation *Self/Other* I communicate issues from other fields that have passed through my own theoretical lens and personal experience. I create an environment that attempts to instigate questions on the self as a construction of the other and a reevaluation on how we look at others.

My experience as an immigrant took me on a long search for my self as a whole, my conscious and unconscious. The theoretical search in the field of psychology and sociology about the self and other assured me that the deep waters of the self could be penetrated through art. The power of art is infinite when we put together different areas of art to create a single piece. As philosophy is the mother of all sciences, by integrating different areas together into one art piece we are closer to philosophy than any other field. Therefore, *Self/Other* is a part of my philosophy.

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