Spring 4-15-2013

Installation Art as a Means of Exploring Place and Activity Fragmentation in Interior Environments Resulting from Contemporary Digital Technology

Cotter D. Christian

INSTALLATION ART AS A MEANS OF EXPLORING PLACE AND ACTVITY FRAGMENTATION IN INTERIOR

ENVIRONMENTS RESULTING FROM CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

by

COTTER CHRISTIAN

Under the Direction of Timothy Nichols

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how information and communication technology creates activity

fragmentation within the interior built environment. This paper analyzes the work of psychologists,

philosophers, architects, artists, designers, and others who have considered our relationship to physical

space as well as how technological advancements alter our behavior and perspective. In addition to

reviewing current thinking on the topic, the research conducted also looks at how architects, artists, and

designers, particularly of the late 20th century, responded to notions of fragmentation and

disconnectedness often spawned by modernization. Through precedent analysis, a strong relationship

between architectural design and installation art emerges. This thesis paper provides a foundation for a

gallery installation that creates an experience for visitors, challenging their relationship to interior space.

INDEX WORDS: Interior design, Installation art, Digital technology, Place

INSTALLATION ART AS A MEANS OF EXPLORING PLACE AND ACTVITY FRAGMENTATION IN INTERIOR

ENVIRONMENTS RESULTING FROM CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

by

COTTER CHRISTIAN

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2013

INSTALLATION ART AS A MEANS OF EXPLORING PLACE AND ACTVITY FRAGMENTATION IN INTERIOR

ENVIRONMENTS RESULTING FROM CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

by

COTTER CHRISTIAN

Committee Chair: Timothy Nichols

Committee: Dawn Haynie

Stan Anderson

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1. INTRODUCTION

Our contemporary world is one of personal technology, instant connectivity, and globalization, disconnecting us from our attachment to place and ultimately, generating a sense of fragmentation. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) allow us to communicate and connect with anyone, anywhere, anytime, but what is the consequence of this constant connectivity? The types of interactions that these devices afford allows us to be connected to more people simultaneously than ever before, but these interactions lack the unexpected and spontaneous nature of those which occur in a non-technologically mediated way. Additionally, the prevalence of ICTs in everyday life allows users to conduct their lives anywhere, adding to a sense of disconnection between activity and space.

Through this review of literature, I hope to explore how modern, personal digital technology fosters a sense of fragmentation between users and the spaces they occupy. The nature of our modern society, aided by ICTs, allows us access to resources and each other anyplace at anytime. This constant connectivity challenges the notion of a static concept of place. By looking at place attachment theories, and how we use these personal communication devices, I intend to draw conclusions that consider what impacts these relationships have on interior space.

This idea will be explored through the design and execution of a gallery installation that simulates a fragmented interior space, calling attention to technology's role in challenging our concept of spatial place attachment.

I will begin by attempting to develop a working definition of sense of place as well as what specifically is the relationship between information and communication technology and this theory. The next section will begin to explore some historical precedents related to questioning the modern condition and fragmentation of user experience within the built environment. Looking to postmodernist

art and architectural theories via the work of Bernard Tschumi and neo-Italian avant garde architects Superstudio and Archizoom, I hope to establish a precedent between this reaction to a perceived fragmentation and today's similar modern condition.

Finally, contemporary installation art will be explored as it has relied upon interactivity and user experience to explore notions of fragmentation and the dislocation of the viewer. By looking at conceptual definitions of installation art as well as researching and evaluating Relational Aesthetics, I hope to gain an understanding of how space-based art installation can influence user experience. Historically, installation art has also been used by architects as a means of exploring conceptual ideas outside of the client-oriented built environment. Building on this precedent, it is my hope to produce a gallery installation that is a manifestation of this analysis, presenting visitors with a hyperbolic experience of fragmentation mediated by technological intervention questioning the relationship between our activities, the built environment, and ultimately each other.

This topic is relevant to the field of interior design in that we are concerned with the experience of users in the built environment. The types of interactions that occur in the spaces we design influence the way that people perceive these spaces. Having an understanding for how our contemporary condition is impacting our relationships and perception of space is important for understanding how we can design interiors that best meet the needs of humanity. Also, there is the potential to infuse spaces with conceptual ideas that precipitate positive social change, ultimately benefitting more than those with the firsthand experience.

2. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

2.1 Terminology and Limitations

In less than one hundred and fifty years, we have advanced from Alexander Bell's first call on

the telephone[1] to an America where over one hundred million people older than thirteen use a mobile

smartphone.[2] This shift from place-based technology to a predominantly mobile platform is changing

the way in which we engage with each other and challenging the meaning of place. In addition to

facilitating our ability to access information anywhere, anyplace, and at anytime, these devices create a

divide between the built environment, how it is used, and its impact on our activities within.

Since any innovation, from printed media to radio is considered "technological innovation," for

the purpose of this exploration I have chosen to focus the scope of technology on Information and

Communication Technology or ICTs. This type of technology includes devices such as smartphones and

other personal communication devices and has changed the way in which we communicate with one

another. Unlike a place-specific, domestic technology like television, these devices provide freedom

from place dedicated activities and rely on some type of interaction, as opposed to a media that is

delivery information in only one direction.

We tend to think of mobile, personal ICTs as something that exists only within the palm of our

hands, but because these devices rely on support infrastructure, they occupy spaces and places beyond

our personal sphere. "Technology is essentially a spatial concept because its operation depends on the

---

[1] "America's Story from America's Library," *The Library of Congress*, accessed October 12, 2012, http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/recon/jb_recon_telephone_1.html.

[2] "comScore Reports January 2012 U.S. Mobile Subscriber Market Share," *comScore*, March 6, 2012, http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2012/3/comScore_Reports_January_2012_U.S._Mobile _Subscriber_Market_Share.

mobilization of human and non-human resources that exist in different places."[3] More importantly,

though these devices are changing our interpersonal relationships and creating a world in which our

experiences are disjointed from our physical surroundings. So while there are potential areas for

exploration with regard to the unseen spatial requirements of mobile technology, this paper will focus

on the connection between the user of a mobile ICT and their surroundings within the context of the

built environment.

Another unique development that merits acknowledgement and possible future exploration is

how technological developments have aided surveillance. Whether self-surveillance through social

media check-ins and updates or city-wide networks of cameras, we are constantly moving through a

highly monitored world. Understanding the social and spatial impacts of this surveillance will not be

exhaustively discussed in this paper, but deserve mention as there may be an interpretation suggesting

a connection to digital surveillance in the proposed gallery installation.

2.2 Mobile ICTs and Human Interaction

It is important to consider human interaction when reviewing technology's impact on our

perception of place in the interior built environment. Later in this paper, the idea of 'sense of place' will

be discussed more thoroughly as well as the apparent lack of empirical analysis of this very subjective

perception. It is my view that among the number of other factors which may impact our emotional

connection to a physical space, the interpersonal interactions (or lack thereof) which we encounter with

others play a significant role in shaping our lasting impression of that place.

---

[3] Steven A. Moore, "Technology, Place, and the Nonmodern Thesis," *Journal of Architectural Education* 54, no. 3 (February 2001): 134.

When the first cell phone call was placed in 1983[4] it is likely that the designers of this technology did not believe it would alter our human interaction beyond merely the convenience of being able to "reach out and touch someone" instantaneously from anywhere. Perhaps they were unable to envision a world where fragmented text messages become an acceptable form of communication or that a smartphone owner could have a video conference with a distant relative while sitting in a park. In a similar fashion, the television set dramatically transformed how we use and design domestic interiors, and yet, it is safe to say that when the television was invented, its intent was never to radically alter domestic, interior space.[5] Yet, this technology "provides a membrane between the public and the private, allowing particular images and sounds of the outside world into domestic space,"[6] and its introduction to our homes has changed how we use these spaces. So while the initial benefit of the smartphone may have been to deliver convenience, its lasting impact, similar to previous technology like televisions, may be radically altering how we use space.

Observing customers standing in line at a grocery store reveals many of them 'killing time' by using their smartphones. The tabloid magazines with celebrity stories of great weight loss or scandalous divorces scream for their attention, yet they are no match to the power of the little screen in our hands. And while these distractions help speed up our perception of time, providing a salve to impatience, they also help create an invisible barrier between us and the others in the queue. They provide a temporary surrounding of personal space which we carry with us throughout our day often at the expense of unexpected interpersonal interaction. [7] In his blog on technology and urban design, Adam Greenfield

---

[4] "Wireless History," *CTIA The Wireless Association*, accessed October 12, 2012, http://www.ctia.org/media/industry_info/index.cfm/AID/11508.

[5] Fábio Duarte and Rodrigo José Firmino, "Infiltrated City, Augmented Space: Information and Communication Technologies, and Representations of Contemporary Spatialities," *The Journal of Architecture* 14, no. 5 (October 2009): 547, doi:10.1080/13602360903187493.

[6] S. Groening, "From 'a Box in the Theater of the World' to 'the World as Your Living Room': Cellular Phones, Television and Mobile Privatization," *New Media & Society* 12, no. 8 (June 14, 2010): 1334, doi:10.1177/1461444810362094.

[7] Ibid., 1336.

claims that personal electronic devices provide us with a "psychological survival tactic" whereby they "cast a psychological bubble around the user[…] prevent[ing] interpersonal communication."[8] Ironically, a device which had the original purpose of bringing people closer together instead is used to create seclusion[9] in actual settings where social interaction could occur.

This insulated "psychological bubble" of personal space reduces our ability to have "unexpected encounters" and "common experiences"[10] with others in our surroundings. There is a mutual understanding of respect for the personal space created by using a mobile device which inhibits casual conversation with others, and more importantly, for the purpose of this project, observation of one's surroundings. This mobile world, according to architect Norberg-Schulz, "would […] impede the 'direct' and 'ordered' contact with others" [11] thus reducing our connections to each other and our surroundings and undermine the unpredictable and unexpected "immediacies of human experience."[12]

Dr. Sherry Turkle is a psychologist and professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society at MIT.[13] Her work looks at the social implications of modern technology including the internet, mobile ICTs, artificial intelligence, and other ways in which that technology is changing our interpersonal relationships. Turkle has concerns that being constantly tethered to personal devices is compromising our ability to have meaningful relationships with others. She claims that this has led to a condition where "[w]e expect more from technology and less from each

---

[8] "Week 39: On Space as a Service | Urbanscale," 39, accessed July 11, 2012, http://urbanscale.org/news/2011/09/30/week-39-on-space-as-a-service/.

[9] Groening, "From 'a Box in the Theater of the World' to 'the World as Your Living Room'," 1339.

[10] David Uzzell, "People-Environment Relationships in a Digital World," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 99.

[11] Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture: Meaning and Place, Selected Essays* (Rizzoli, 1988), 37.

[12] Adam Sharr, "Heidegger for Architects / Adam Sharr" (2007): 2.

[13] "Sherry Turkle," *Massachusettes Institute of Technology*, accessed October 15, 2012, http://www.mit.edu/~sturkle/.

other."[14] Our online relationships are managed in a way that is impossible to impose on "real-world,"

face-to-face interaction, affording us the illusion of a social life without the demands of friendship

through what she considers one-way controlled communication.[15] Our devices allow us to communicate

with others on our own time and in our own way and often, as is the case of social networking, we

advertise only the things that make us look better. Therefore we've created an identity for ourselves

that behaves and exists differently then who we truly are, and is disjointed from reality. While these

devices may allow us to be instantaneously connected to numerous people, Turkle argues that the

quality of those interactions mediated by these devices are poor. Our "plugged-in" and "unplugged"

refer to whether or not we are connected to the immediate access to people, tasks, and information, or

not, essentially reinforcing the divide between our on and off screen lives.[16]

In addition to evaluating how ICTs are transforming our interpersonal relationships, it is also

important to consider how the relationship with ourselves is augmented or modified by this technology.

If we carry this "always-on/always-on-me"[17] technology with us at all times, then our ability to be alone,

or to separate from society in a meaningful way is compromised,[18] and instead we are forced to create

this type of isolation in a planned and manufactured manner. Being alone allows us the opportunity to

reflect on our condition and to develop independent social skills, and as noted by Heidegger, "when we

notice our own being – we achieve a kind of respite […] allow[ing] people to locate themselves in a

bigger picture."[19] But, having the ability to be constantly connected makes "[b]eing alone feel like a

[14] *Sherry Turkle: Connected, but Alone? | Video on TED.com*, 2012,
http://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together.html.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Sherry Turkle, "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self," in *Handbook of Mobile Communications and Social Change*, ed. James Katz (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, Forthcoming), 2,
http://sodacity.net/system/files/Sherry-Turkle_The-Tethered-Self.pdf.
[17] Turkle, "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self."
[18] Ibid., 15.
[19] Sharr, "Heidegger for Architects / Adam Sharr," 8.

problem that needs to be solved." [20] This is most noted when we forget our device, we have no service, or we have exhausted the life span of our battery, potentially generating a feeling of separation anxiety. Only a decade or two ago, this anxiety did not exist, since surviving without constant connectivity was the status quo. As mentioned previously, the irony of these devices is that they have also created a condition where we crave being alone with them as we use them to define personal space boundaries within public space allowing us to engage privately with our mobile device.

My first experience with ICT induced isolation was when I visited an EasyEverything internet café in New York's Times Square around the turn of the millennium. Granted, this context is somewhat different in that fixed computer terminals are the method of accessing the one-way communication that Turkle discusses. In the case of EasyEverything, rows of PCs greeted guests, affording easy and inexpensive access to the internet. Not having internet access at home, and prior to the ubiquity of smartphones, internet cafes like EasyEverything became almost daily destinations for many in this urban setting. What struck me upon entering this establishment for the first time was how eerily quiet the space was. The usual New York din was apparent, but it was only accompanied by the methodic clicking of keyboards as people scoured the internet and responded to email. This café provided a place to conduct a specific activity – search the web – but it was clear that this activity could occur in total isolation, despite being surrounded by hundreds of people. I don't recall ever speaking with anyone at an internet café, and, in fact the only time interaction was necessary was to pay, and even that eventually became automated.

One could argue that previous iterations of "technology" also changed the dynamic of interaction, for example, reading a newspaper on a subway, walking with a book, etc. While these do present some interesting concerns with regard to cognitive distraction, and anecdotally people

---

[20] *Sherry Turkle*, 2012.

transcend reality in the pages of fiction while moving through daily life,[21] the experience of reading a newspaper or book in public is one that you do by yourself, and does not involve online interpersonal communication. Admittedly, the issue gets complicated by the ability to read articles and books on a personal communications device.

In the end, what are the negative implications of the change in human interaction brought on by the prolific use of mobile devices? As we will see later, there may be implications to our ability to connect with and locate ourselves within a larger global and local context due to the altering of the types of human interactions that occur within them. Disengaging from the spontaneous, human, face-to-face interactions is made increasingly convenient by not only ICTs but also automation of tasks previously performed by humans. This allows us to no longer be forced to address the impact of our local interactions on our activities; instead permitting us to find communities located in the digital elsewhere that align with what we perceive as our norms and beliefs.[22] This creates polarization – as we have seen evidenced in politics through the advent of party-leaning cable 'news' – and potentially disconnects shared experience from physical space.

2.3 Benefits

It is important to acknowledge that while the intent of this paper and design installation is to question if and why our modern society, vis a vis instantaneous and constant connectivity mediated though mobile ICTs, is fractured and disjoined from the spaces we inhabit, it is still possible to concede that these devices have many benefits. ICTs can improve how we use and encounter the spaces around us, and new types of interactions and activities can occur in cities and the built environment as a result of these new relationships with technology.

---

[21] Lev Grossman, "A Book Lover's Guide to Reading and Walking at the Same Time," *Time Entertainment*, June 6, 2012, http://entertainment.time.com/2012/06/06/a-book-lovers-guide-to-reading-and-walking-at-the-same-time/.
[22] Turkle, "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self," 14.

At our fingertips we have access and exposure to information from around the world, perhaps creating a sense that we are part of a larger, global community. Some of our online interactions facilitated by mobile technology manifest themselves in meaningful (or not so meaningful) face-to-face meetings through dating sites like match.com or networking through linkedin.com. We are able to extend our social networks to people who are graphically or temporally distant through Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Yi-Fu Tuan in *Rootedness Versus Sense of Place,* notes how gossip is used to elevate places within the city like stores[23] and restaurants which is facilitated in the world of mobile devices by applications such as Scout Mob, Yelp, and others.

In another example, Adam Greenfield proposes concepts for a new urban environment where through surveillance, mobile devices, and meaningful data collection and dissemination, the objects of the city could exist as constantly customizable servants to its citizens. [24] In his vision, literally all space can become shared space, occupiable through carefully coordinated mobile interaction.   These creative innovations change how we use the city and interact with each other, and there are many benefits from this access, but regardless of perceived benefit, it is prudent to consider the impact that these rapid developments have on our interactions with each other. Furthermore, by altering these interactions, are we ultimately reinforcing the fragmentation and disjunction prevalent in modern society?

<div align="center">

3. SENSE OF PLACE

</div>

If our modern technology is fostering a fragmented society in terms of our interpersonal interactions, it may be evident in the ways in which we perceive our surroundings in the built environment. It is also important to consider the concept of place within the context of how mobile technology allows us to conduct multiple tasks from any locale, and is making our activities less place

---

[23] Yi-Fu Tuan, "Rootedness Versus Sense of Place," *Landscape* 24, no. 1 (1980): 6.
[24] Adam Greenfield, "Beyond the Smart City," *Urbanscale*, February 17, 2011, urbanscale.org/news/2011/02/17/beyond-the-smart-city.

dependent. In the following section, I will provide a brief overview of the concept of place as it relates to the built environment, and review literature supporting a fragmentation of our perception of place resulting from the technology of modern society.

3.1 Working definition of place

It would appear from the reviewed literature on this topic, that there exists much division on how to concretely define 'sense of place,' and at times the terminology becomes a proverbial catch-all for all concepts related to meaning, authenticity, and experience within the different physical space that we inhabit throughout our lives. For the intent of this paper and design project I am looking to see how the idea of "place" relates to our modern fragmented-through-technology society. The literature that was reviewed for this paper on the topic exposes that sense of place is not only a somewhat elusive concept, but that it is highly subjective.

The concept of "sense of place" falls under a number of different headings including place-attachment theory and placemaking. There are also varied interpretations and applications of this theory as evidenced through how it is used in multiple disciplines outside of architecture and design including geography, ethnography, psychology, and others. J.E. Malpas in *Place and Experience* attempts to define the concept of place as a blend of subjectivity and objectivity, ideas that will be explored in more detail later in this section. He also reaffirms that there is currently not a cohesive framework for the defining the idea of place since it is addressed through varied disciplines and varied authors who look at this concept through multiple lenses. [25]

There also exists the idea that place can exist purely as a creation of our minds, outside the boundaries of physical space, adding to the complexity of defining the term. According to Bachelard as

---

[25] J.E. Malpas, *Place and Experience* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31.

cited in *The Fate of Place* by Edward Casey, "place can be nonphysical and yet still count fully as place."[26] This type of psychological place allows for even more flexibility in defining the terminology since we are able to create the notion of place without necessarily having any type of architectural construction[27] simply by thinking about and accessing memories of an actual place or using our imagination to create place in our minds.

Leaving the notion of non-physical place aside, it becomes important to establish a distinction between space and place as part of a comprehensive attempt to understand this concept. This too is complicated by perception. Malpas states that "in the absence of subjects there can be neither place nor perhaps, in a certain sense, space."[28] Since the development of a sense of place appears rooted in the experience of the user, then it would make sense that, in contrast to Malpas, space could exist without a subject, while the inverse could not occur. Meanwhile, with the exception of the aforementioned ideas of non-physical place, place cannot exist without space. [29] Without a sense of place, the spaces of our built environment are meaningless, or as Casey explains, "without places, being-in-the-world would be merely diffuse and disjointed -- overt and public and yet shapeless."[30] This idea is echoed by Yi-Fu Tuan, stating, "space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning."[31] It is also said that place implies, unlike space, a "strong emotional tie, temporary or more longlasting, between a person and a particular location."[32] Finally, Christian Norberg-Shulz claims, "[o]nly when space becomes a system of meaningful places, does it become alive to us."[33]

---

[26] Edward S. Casey, "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource] : a Philosophical History / Edward S. Casey" (1997): 288.

[27] Jonathan D. Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 6, no. 1 (March 1986): 54, doi:10.1016/S0272-4944(86)80034-2.

[28] Malpas, *Place and Experience*, 37.

[29] Ibid., 42.

[30] Casey, "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource]," 251.

[31] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1977), 136.

[32] Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?," 50.

[33] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 24.

Having attempted to establish that there is a difference between a 'meaningless' volume that is 'space' and the abstract concept of 'place,' it becomes necessary to look at how the sense of place is created. It would appear from the literature that developing a sense of place or "place making" involves an emotionally charged sensory experience. The combination of sights, sounds, and smells[34] creates a connection to a particular space which may develop over time. Bernard Tschumi, in *Artforum* paints a picture of an emotionally charged sensory experience that would lend itself to creating an attachment to a certain place:

> "The pervasive smells of rubber, concrete, flesh; the taste of dust; the discomforting rubbing of an elbow on an abrasive surface; the pleasure of fur-lined walls and the pain of a corner hit upon in the dark; the echo of a hall – space is not simply the three-dimensional projection of a mental representation, but it is something that is heard, and is acted upon."[35]

In addition to a sensory experience helping foster a connection to place, historical narrative also plays an important role in our association with place attachment. Yi-Fu Tuan describes this feeling of attachment as "rootedness" and that we seek to find meaning in place by reveling in our historic connection, looking backward instead of forward.[36] He suggests that spaces have the potential to possess a "time depth"[37] where one is able to feel a sense of history in a space. By connecting to spaces historically, they take on a meaning that is bigger than their current life, and that history paints an image of the place in our minds that possess meaning. We see historic narrative used frequently by developers, architects, and designers as a way of bringing authenticity to a project. From that authenticity and exposure of historic narrative, users are able to make lasting connections to the environment.

There does seem to be a bias toward place as a positive notion. It is assumed that "places that have unique, irreplaceable, non-transferable advantages to offer will be the more highly desirable real

---

[34] Tuan, *Space and Place*, 183–184.
[35] Bernard Tschumi, "Architecture and Limits II," *Artforum* 19, no. 7 (March 1981): 45.
[36] Tuan, "Rootedness Versus Sense of Place," 7.
[37] Ibid., 8.

estate."[38] And while the notion of place making may have been hijacked by developers and used as a euphemism to make authentic experience and place attachment a commodity, if we consider the concepts as presented, the idea of 'sense of place' can be both favorable and unfavorable. The DMV, a child's negative associations with going to the doctor, prison, etc. all represent places where the design and/or the experience will conjure up negative associations. Ultimately, while either positive or negative, engagement in the physical surroundings and making emotional, historical, and sensory connections all aid in the creation of a sense of place.

As already alluded, many challenges exist when attempting to define 'place.' The inherent subjectivity behind the concept of place causes problems with epistemological evaluation and quantifiably analyzing the 'placeness' of place. It is impossible to encounter an object, space, or experience with no presuppositions since we are all defined by our histories, social conventions, and every other experience that defines who we are.[39] Therefore, the phenomenological approach can be highly subjective, in other words, what is one type of place for one individual might be a dramatically different type of place for someone else.[40] Add to that the idea that place can exist at different scales, anything from a cozy armchair to an entire country could be defined as place.[41] In the end, a qualifiable analysis seems to be the most likely way to rectify the highly subjective notion of place.

The literature also points much emphasis to the idea that place is created as a result not only of sensory or physical features of space, but more importantly through the events and activities that occur in those spaces. Edward Casey, in *The Fate of Place*, states, "in the case of architecture an event is not

---

[38] William J. Mitchell, "The Revenge of Place," in *This Is Not Architecture*, ed. Kester Rattenbury (New York: Routledge, 2002), 53.
[39] Sarah Bonnemaison and Ronit Eisenbach, *Installations By Architects: Experiments in Building and Design*, 1st ed. (Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 74.
[40] Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?," 54.
[41] Tuan, *Space and Place*, 149.

only something that takes place; it also gives place, gives room for things to happen."[42] These events or

activities that occur in particular places therefore serve as another means of generating place

attachment. Even in the vernacular terminology, the phrase, "taking place," is used to describe that an

event has occurred thus connecting these activities to a spatial condition. [43]

Christian Norberg-Schulz explored the notion of place making by suggesting that "human

identity goes together with the identity of place."[44] Our identity both informs the places we inhabit and

also help establish our identity. Through common bonds and a shared experience, we are able to

generate a collective notion of the meaning of place which follows Sime's argument that, "a primary

function of 'place' is to engender a sense of belonging and identity."[45] Another key concept to Norber-

Schulz's theories on place is the notion of orientation and understanding of one's relationship to the

totality of the larger world.[46] This is echoed in the work of Sime, "[t]o gain an existential foothold, man

has to be able to orient himself, he has to know where he is."[47] This develops an understanding that

place making depends upon the concepts of orientation and identification. Heidegger extends this idea

to exterior place as he saw having a connection to natural elements as a way for individuals to locate

themselves in the proverbial bigger picture by reminding us of our own being.[48]

Place is established in a number of different ways, and its interpretation is distinctly subjective.

It also provides a means for us to determine our relationship to the world at large. One other way in

which place can be defined or created, particularly important to this project and investigation, is

through interaction. As previously mentioned, Norberg-Shulz suggests that our identity is linked to the

places we inhabit, and in the context of interaction he proposes, "[a]s togetherness is a basic existential

---

[42] Casey, "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource]," 313.
[43] Malpas, *Place and Experience*, 33.
[44] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 196.
[45] Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?," 56.
[46] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 38.
[47] Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?," 51.
[48] Sharr, "Heidegger for Architects / Adam Sharr," 7–8.

structure, a place is always something we share with others."[49] Our conception of place should account

for the interactions that occur within them.[50] These interactions have a strong relationship to how we

conceive of particular places, but the places themselves also dictate the potential for sociability.

3.2 Technology, Activity Fragmentation, and the Perception of Place

3.2.1 Technology as a Spatial Concept

We tend to think of modern technology as bits, data, cables, signals, satellites, and any number

of unseen forces powering our devices and connectivity. But, in this analysis, it has been revealed that

modern technology has the characteristics of a spatial concept. It is important to recall, that for the

purpose of this paper that the term, technology, is used primarily to refer to digital, electronic devices

that provide access to information and communication. When focused solely on these devices, the

notion of technology as spatial is potentially more abstract. In this section the intent is to examine the

disconnection and disjunction that information and communication technology creates between users

and their physical surroundings.

Steven Moore, in "Technology, Place and the Nonmodern Thesis," underlines the notion that

technology and place are inseparable concepts. He admits that defining technology as a spatial concept

is somewhat more challenging than discussing place in the context of a physical environment. Using the

work of Bruno Latour as an example, Moore describes this technological spatial construct as one

comprised of relationships between knowledge, practices, and human resources, and all of these

relationships exist with some type of social and spatial quality.[51] "[T]he relationship of place and

technology is both spatial and discursive. It is a dialogue of cause and effect, means and ends."[52] In one

---

[49] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 196.
[50] Rowan Wilken, "Mobilizing Place: Mobile Media, Peripatetics, and the Renegotiation of Urban Places," *Journal of Urban Technology* 15, no. 3 (December 2008): 46, doi:10.1080/10630730802677939.
[51] Moore, "Technology, Place, and the Nonmodern Thesis," 134.
[52] Ibid.

example of the spatial qualities of this type of technology, ICT users can manipulate personal space simply by using their device.

3.2.2 Modern Technology is Changing Association with Place

Constantly being connected to a device that allows us instantaneous connectivity to individuals, virtual activities, and information, is changing how we are able to use our surroundings. The freedom of being able to connect with anyone at any time changes our requirements for where we need to be in order to engage in different types of interactions. If one of the ways we assign a sense of place is determined by the types of interactions which we have in a particular space, then there exists the possibility that ICTs are changing how we are able to assign meaning to places we physically encounter.

Early in the development of cellular phones, there was a noticeable shift in how people conducted phone conversations. Since our phones were no longer tethered to a cord in the wall or a strictly limited "cordless," it changed our familiar understanding that we were calling a place to one where we were instead calling a person that could be anywhere.[53] Our communication became person-based and not place-based as evidenced in the frequency with which people found it necessary to describe their location when answering a call on their cellular device often asking, "where are you?" as representational of a desire to locate and contextualize what would otherwise be a displaced voice on the other end of a mobile device.[54]

Furthermore, as David Uzzell describes, "[t]he movement of people, goods, and ideas with such rapidity changes one's ideas of what is local and of the spaces and places to which one can relate."[55] This notion of technology facilitating globalization is not a new idea since many technological advances throughout history have resulted in a shrinking world (ships, trains, planes, etc.). These shrinking

---

[54] Wilken, "Mobilizing Place," 42.
[55] Uzzell, "People-Environment Relationships in a Digital World," 97.

distances change our perception of our place in the world. With ICTs, distances can be shrunk

instantaneously by connecting with anyone, anywhere, at anytime both verbally and visually creating an

experience where our relative perception of place in the world is constantly changing. In the 20th

century, Martin Heidegger was interested in the philosophical implications of space in the context of

technology, and in *Poetry, language, thought* described how modern technology is changing the global

relationship:

> "All distances in time and space are shrinking. He now reaches overnight, by plane, places
> which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio,
> of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all [...] Yet, this frantic abolition
> of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance."[56]

What has been created in this modern world is what Fabio Duarnte and Rodrigo Jose Firmino

describe as a "paradoxical coexistence of the rapid, instantaneous and immaterial aspects of global

information flows with slow, place-bound, ground and materialized places."[57] Our world operates at

two different speeds: the digital, globally accessible connection facilitated by ICTs and the activities and

connections to our physical space. As the capabilities of the ICTs become more powerful, will this

perception paradox expand, creating additional disconnection from place, or, as will be explored later,

will these device create a new understanding of place by layering data and information onto our physical

environment through augmentation?

Arguments exist suggesting that this technologically mediated disconnection from physical

space has created a renewed interest in the qualities of physical architecture as a means of generating

sense of place.[58] We see this in the work of Joseph Pine and James Gilmore who coined the term

---

[56] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought. Translations and Introd. by Albert Hofstadter*, His Works ([1st ed.], 1971), 163.
[57] Duarte and Firmino, "Infiltrated City, Augmented Space," 549.
[58] Ibid., 553.

"Experience Economy"[59] and have recently written a book on the need for authenticity in experience.[60] As interactions and experience becomes more and more facilitated by digital devices, some argue that this creates a heightened need for more authentic, real experiences. "[R]ather than necessarily 'liberate' us from place, as some critics would have us believe, these technologies arguably refocus the individual on the fluctuating and fleeting experiences of place/s and the transformation impacts of these technologies on everyday life."[61] By being absorbed in instantaneous connectivity, we may, as Wilken proposes, be more aware of our fleeting physical surroundings because we are no longer able to take them for granted.

3.2.3 Concept of Disjunction

Bernard Tschumi defines disjunction as "the act of disjoining or condition of being disjoined; separation, disunion"[62] His research and writing look at activities in space as events, and sees these activities as part of a "discontinuous reality" of fragmented experiences.[63] He highlights the disconnection between place and event, and as will be explored in a later section, he proposed that by studying the relationship between activities, events, and place, architecture could be used as a facilitator to bring about social change. He described the condition of modern life as an "often bemoaned disjunction between man and object, object and events, events and spaces or being and meaning."[64] Tschumi is introduced at this point, because his terminology and investigation into disjunction finds many similar parallels with the work of others regarding technology and disconnection of activity and place.

---

[59] B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy, Updated Edition*, Updated (Harvard Business Review Press, 2011).

[60] James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine, *Authenticity : What Consumers Really Want / James H. Gilmore, B. Joseph Pine II* (Boston, Mass. : Harvard Business School Press, c2007., 2007).

[61] Wilken, "Mobilizing Place," 51.

[62] Bernard Tschumi, *Bernard Tschumi: Questions of Space* (AA Publications, 2004), 99.

[63] Ibid., 9.

[64] Ibid., 99.

Edward Casey in, *The Fate of Place*, describes our "world [as] nothing but a scene of endless displacement; the massive spread of electronic technology, which makes irrelevant where you are so long as you can link up with other users of the same technology."[65] It is hard not to infer a negative connotation from Casey in this quote, and much of this review has found that this type of displacement is not a favorable condition. ICTs facilitate a boundless perception of space by allowing instantaneous access to information and communication around the world, creating a "space without limits" in which, Christian Norberg-Shultz declares that "man cannot feel 'at home.'" [66]

One way that modern ICTs foster a disjunction between activity and place is by facilitating our ability to be two places at once.[67] We are able to conduct and maintain relationships in a virtual world, while simultaneously existing in a physical space. While this condition of disjunction is nothing new to the human condition, current ICTs and their mobile proliferation make existing in this way much more convenient… for better or worse.

3.2.4 Activity and Place

One of the most notable benefits of our personal, mobile technology is the liberation from the need to be in any specific location to participate in a particular activity. As was previously discussed, this newfound freedom presents consequences in terms of fostering a world of disjunction between activity and physical space, but it also makes the segmentation of our daily activities more difficult. Paid work moves to unconventional locations and/or time of day because of the proliferation of personal ICTs.[68] This has the potential to free up when, how, and where we can work, but it also may create a condition where one never stops working. Where leaving the office and going home meant erecting a proverbial barrier between 'life' and work, with tethered ICTs, creating this sense of separation becomes a task in

---

[65] Casey, "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource]," xiii.
[66] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 34.
[67] Wilken, "Mobilizing Place," 49.
[68] B. Alexander et al., "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime? Developing Indicators to Assess the Spatial and Temporal Fragmentation of Activities," *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 38, no. 4 (2011): 679.

and of itself.   We become present in multiple places simultaneously[69] challenging our ability to be fully present in any one place.

While there are other examples of negative consequences of the mobilization of activity, there are also some unique benefits. Tschumi wrote of the disjunction of activity and physical place indicating that "space and its usage are two opposed notions that exclude one another, generating an endless array of uncertainties."[70] Technology has the opportunity to free our associations with how a place might be used, creating a number of new uses for space. Tschumi's example of this phenomenon is "[c]hurches [that] are turned into movie houses, banks into yuppie restaurants, hat factories into artists' studios, subway tunnels into night clubs, and sometimes night clubs into churches"[71] (see Figure 1). So, while our mobile ICTs are blurring the boundaries between work and home, relaxation and responsibility, virtual relationships and physical interaction, it has also created a unique condition where we can question activity's relationship to space, and potentially empower the development of new types of spaces.

Figure 1. Church Used as Shopping Mall in New York City.
Gobetz, Wally. *NYC -- Ladies Mile: Limelight Marketplace.* From: Flickr, http://bit.ly/VLUJwl (accessed December 10, 2012).

---

[69] Lineu Castello, *Rethinking the Meaning of Place* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 103.
[70] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 21.
[71] Ibid., 217.

Some of those opportunities for new use of space were explored by Adam Greenfield and his urban planning and consulting firm, Unrbanscale. He proposed new ways that the city could serve its inhabitants, capitalizing on the way in which we are able to perform many types of activities regardless of physical environment. This would allow underutilized or unused spaces to take on a new life, thus creating unexpected environments for activities to occur. Greenfield stated, "the same process that unlocks whatever potential a building may have for intense, heterogeneous utilization can also permit otherwise interstitial spaces or pieces of urban infrastructure to be repurposed for active use."[72] While it is obvious that this would benefit the creation of a spontaneous and dynamic city, one that is responsive to the needs of its users, all potentially managed and accessed through person al ICTs, it is difficult to overlook the sustainability benefit, affording us efficient use of all types of spaces.

3.2.5 Place and Time

In a similar model to the disconnection between activity and physical surrounding, modeled by mobile ICTs, we also see that this technology is eliminating temporal distinction between activities and roles. In her article[?], "Always-on/Always-on-you," MIT Psychologist, Sherry Turkle describes an experience where she is forced to enter a functional role as a mother in a situation where previously this might not occur. "In the past, I did not usually perform my role as mother in the presence of my professional colleagues. Now a call from my fifteen-year-old daughter calls me forth as mother."[73] Our devices change the dynamic of how we view our environment from moment to moment or from text message to text message, often forcing us to take on different roles throughout the day regardless of where we may be. Our role while inhabiting a space may be a contributing factor influencing the meaning that we use to form our sense of that place. If our roles are constantly changing while we are in a fixed physical space, perhaps our ability to generate a sense of place is compromised due to the

---

[72] "Week 39: On Space as a Service | Urbanscale."
[73] Turkle, "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self," 3.

rapidity in which our experience can change. To extend Turkle's example, a woman-as-mom in a particular environment may make her perception of that space entirely different than woman-as-boss. My personal reflection on this phenomenon reminds me of to the childhood experience of parent-teacher conferences. In some strange way, going to my school classroom with my parents, in the role of "son" made me see the space differently than when I was in my regular role of "student." While understandably not scientific, I propose this anecdotal example as a means of considering ways in which role could impact perception of place, and if so, how technology with its blurring of temporal delimitation of roles may impact this development of perception.

Additionally, as our temporal parameters for activity become more nebulous, "spaces themselves become luminal, not entirely public, not entirely private."[74] We conduct private business and hold private conversations in places that would otherwise be considered public while at the same time broadcast private behaviors into public social networks. Again, facilitated by personal, mobile, ICTs, our activities have further become disconnected from the space in which they occur. In addition to the type of activities in which we participate being less spatially regulated, so too is the quality of privacy altered.

3.2.6 Augmentation of Place

"Contemporary urban space is intertwined by all sorts of data, information and signs which flow through ICTs' apparatuses, creating what has been called augmented space."[75]

The notion of 'technology' serving as a means to augment our surroundings is nothing new. "[R]eligion, magic, metaphysics and art have always provided means for augmenting the immediate material worlds of our existence."[76] Now, however, the term "augmented reality" has taken on a new

---

[74] Ibid.
[75] Duarte and Firmino, "Infiltrated City, Augmented Space," 562.
[76] Ibid., 545–546.

meaning, and is usually used to refer to the overlay of a data rich experience on top of physical reality. This can occur in a very literal manner with the invention of mobile applications such as Layar[77], or in the more abstract manner in which we mix our digital and physical experiences simultaneously.

Bernard Tschumi noted that "much of the city does not belong to the realm of the visible anymore"[78] as a means of considering the notion that experiences within the city exist as something that occurs regardless of the physical forms of the city. This same idea can be extended to augmentation of place, in that a number of virtual interrelations and layers of data are occurring in cyberspace around our physical environment. Some of our devices allow us to access this data, but regardless, these virtual activities are occurring unrelated to their physical surroundings. When we engage with this information and data, we are, in a sense, augmenting our physical reality.

In a somewhat literal example, one can physically be located in a city, and yet exist within that city purely in an augmented capacity through a smartphone with GPS. In his essay "The Revenge of Place," William Mitchell recalls a time when he arrived at an airport in Texas at night, picking up a rental car, and driving to the parking deck of his hotel, relying exclusively on the electronic screen of the GPS for guidance.[79] In this experience, no mental map of the physical surrounding was created, and the ICT provided the only necessary understanding about the place he temporarily inhabited – a line on a screen. This augmented experience, disconnected the author from his physical surroundings thus challenging his ability to create a sense of place.

This augmentation of the physical environment presents potential issues for architecture and the desire to create spaces that encourage meaning and place making. Not to mention the challenges posed by designing environments that address, anticipate, and encourage the activities and events of

---

[77] "Layar," accessed October 19, 2012, http://www.layar.com/.
[78] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 215.
[79] Mitchell, "The Revenge of Place," 48.

everyday life. Judith Donath suggests that the solution for bridging this augmented and physical divide

is that the architecture needs to somehow mirror these digital interactions. "The architecture of public

space now faces the challenge of uniting the immediate and the virtual, potentially by becoming itself an

interactive medium, connecting the inhabitants with all their surrounding spaces."[80] While the simple

overlay of technologically mediated interaction within the built environment may help, as Donath

suggests, unite the virtual and the physical, it is imperative to consider that sometimes these

technological interventions only serve to provide what Duarte and Firmino call an "illusion of modernity

rather than a real transformation of space."[81] If our interactions with the built environment are to serve

as a means of resolving some disjunction between augmented experience and physical experience, then

those interactions must be sincere and develop a measured balance between the nuances of digital

interaction and those interactions that occur in a physical environment.

4. POSTMODERNISM AND MEANING

4.1 Reaction to the Modern Movement

>*"technology is inextricably linked to our contemporary condition: to say that society is now about*
>
>*media and mediation makes us aware that the direction taken by technology is less the*
>
>*domination of nature through technology then the development of information and the*
>
>*construction of the world as a set of images."[82]*

For this section, I have chosen to look at the issue of place attachment and technology through

the lens of the postmodern period. The readings have shown that this period, for both art and

architecture, were marked by a desire to return meaning to a world of rationality. One of the key

---

[80] Judith S. Donath, "Technological Interventions in Everyday Interaction," in *Art/React: Interactive Installation Art*, 1st ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 2008), 34.
[81] Duarte and Firmino, "Infiltrated City, Augmented Space," 546.
[82] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 245.

features of the rational, modernist era was the reliance on science and technology. This technology was seen as a way to solve all of the world's problems, and architecture was part of that solution. To those who disagreed, however, these machines and this mentality did nothing but alienate society from the experiences of life. Today we are faced with a similar dilemma as our technology forces us to reconsider how we interact with each other, and how we assign meaning to the relationships and places of our fragmented lives. Perhaps, by considering our current condition through the lens of postmodernism, we may discover new ways to question and critique our current fragmented condition.

We stand at an interesting position with regard to today's technology. When considering our ICTs in the modernist framework, like the modern city, they appear to focus our efforts on work and consumption.[83] Unlike the "machines" feared by postmoderns, by connecting us virtually to vast networks of people, and augmenting our surroundings with dynamically changing information, they may also allow for new and unexpected events to occur in ways and places we have yet to consider. However, the fragmented condition remains. The machines of the Industrial Revolution alienated workers from the products of their labor, a symptom of how functionality, rationality, and order were favored over unpredictable experience. As seen in the previous sections of this paper, our contemporary information and communication technology has also fostered a society of alienation by disconnecting us from the unexpected and unpredictable encounters of face to face relationships, instead replacing them with technologically mediated, one-way communication. Paradoxically, "our communication technologies simultaneously enhance and alienate our communication."[84] Our predictable, one-way communication mirrors the modern city in its lack, according to Christian Norberg-Shultz, of providing "enough possibilities for life."[85]

---

[83] Graham Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics," *Artintelligence*, March 23, 2009, 845, artintelligence.net/review/?p=845.
[84] *Sherry Turkle*, 2012.
[85] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 26.

We experience fragmented relationships mediated by our ICTs. Instead of presenting an honest portrayal of ourselves to society, digital technology allows us to present the self that we want to be, what makes us look good.[86] The capitalist overtones of achievement and success are attached to this type of interaction. The technology allows us to be something we are not, and is seen as the key to unlocking us from our routine condition. Through this world of instantaneous, digital interaction we can escape from whatever our reality might actually be, at a moment's notice. "Being 'elsewhere' than where you might be has become something of a marker of one's sense of self-importance."[87]

From the reading, there appears to be a strong separation between the modern, universal ideal, and the postmodern desire for sense of place. In his article, "Technology, Place and the Nonmodern Thesis," Steven Moore succinctly outlines the difference between modern and postmodern beliefs when he states that moderns value tech and postmoderns value place.[88] In his evaluation, he declared that modernists thought "machines will free us from the drudgery of place-bound tyrannies."[89] This favoring of technology, combined with a post-Enlightenment rationalism[90] served to alienate society from "place." According to Norberg-Shultz, "the loss of place has come about because the Modern Movement did not succeed in healing the split between thought and feeling."[91]

This modern disconnect between the functional attributes of society and the sentiment of the people led to a rise in the quest for meaning. Postmodernists thought that by embedding their work, environment, and activities with meaning that, in fact, they would be able to overcome the overly rationalized modern condition. Today we see that "digital communications networks – produce the commoditization of accessibility […] reduc[ing] the capacity of places (both physical and online) to

---

[86] *Sherry Turkle*, 2012.
[87] Turkle, "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self," 5.
[88] Moore, "Technology, Place, and the Nonmodern Thesis," 130.
[89] Ibid., 135.
[90] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 184.
[91] Ibid., 187.

distinguish themselves simply by virtue of accessibility. To be competitive, they have to provide something that you cannot find anywhere else." [92] In other words, our ICTs have aided in fostering an environment of same-ness, not unlike the uniformity preached by early modernists, and the best way to confront this homogeneity is uniqueness.

Adam Greenfield of Urbanscale see technology as a means of providing heterogeneity through an "intensive mixed use giv[ing] rise to a vivid and resonant micro-urbanity."[93] In their modern city, the rules are constantly changing and adjusting to the needs of the users, allowing an unexpected experience. What some of their ideas seem to neglect is the role of capitalism and industry, which craves a predictable context in which to solicit new participants and customers. Their strategy, as evidenced in the success of chains like Starbucks, is instead to sell the appeal of homogeneity as opposed to offering unique and transient experiences.

Providing the notion of "meaning" was particularly important to postmodern architects. And while in retrospect, postmodern architecture, unlike the more critical position of postmodern art, is often viewed as a somewhat definitive aesthetic style,[94] its intent remained to answer society's "demand for meaning."[95] This hunger for meaning arose from society's lack of fulfillment from science and technology, and its inability to help them understand daily life. [96] Life, and to a certain degree, the built environment where the events of life occurred became alienating and meaningless. [97] The solution, then, was to look for ways in which meaning could be embedded into our surroundings, offering society hope that their lives had purpose.

---

[92] Mitchell, "The Revenge of Place," 53.
[93] "Week 39: On Space as a Service | Urbanscale."
[94] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 17.
[95] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 181.
[96] Sharr, "Heidegger for Architects / Adam Sharr," 24.
[97] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 181.

Guy Debord saw a way for the built environment to again have meaning. He believed that "[a]rchitecture must advance by taking as its subject emotionally moving situation, more than emotionally moving forms, as the materials it works with." [98] The built environment becomes that incubator of meaning "when it offers rich possibilities of identification."[99] Edward Casey quoted Derrida in his claim that architecture must be a vessel that allows for the activity of life to occur: "architecture is a writing of space, a mode of spacing which makes a place for the event."[100] It is this concept of "event" that carries through much of the writings by Bernard Tschumi and others when attempting to develop ways of connecting users to the built environment in a meaningful way. "The most general aim must be to broaden the non-mediocre portion of life."[101]

This call for a new architecture, with a focus on the activity and events of life, was thought to be by some, a means of achieving social change. It was believed that the "urban context itself could be a means to accelerate social change" [102] if it was designed in such a manner that celebrated life events and did not promote the disenfranchisement developed during the modernist period. Their hope was "to design the conditions that would make it possible for this non hierarchical, nontraditional society to happen."[103] By acting as revolutionaries, postmodern thinkers like Tschumi believed that architects could "be part of professional forces trying to arrive at new social and urban structures." [104]

The rationalist modern era, along with other conditions of modernization, according to the postmodernists that followed, ushered in a sense of alienation among society's workers. Postmodernist architects believed that they could design buildings and cities that would celebrate the unexpected

---

[98] Guy Debord, "Towards a Situationist International," in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop, Documents on Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel, 2006), 97.
[99] Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 24.
[100] Casey, "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource]," 312.
[101] Debord, "Towards a Situationist International," 97.
[102] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7.
[103] Ibid., 258.
[104] Ibid., 9.

events of life as a means of reclaiming the city from the drudgery of machines. Through this attention to

event, buildings could become vessels for meaning, fostering the ability to create a sense of place.

Extrapolating this argument to today's condition, we find ourselves once again at the mercy of our

alienating technology. Our personal, digital communications devices connect us to hundreds of people

at any given time, and yet, those interactions lack the spontaneity and unexpected qualities of a face to

face encounter. Not to mention, we portray ourselves in social media in ways that are inconsistent with

reality, thus creating a sense of fragmentation and disjunction between our online, mobile lives and the

activities of everyday life.

4.2 Bernard Tschumi and the London Conceptualists

"No more masterplans, no more locating in a fixed place, but a new heterotopia."[105]

Bernard Tschumi is a postmodernist who sought solutions to the disenfranchisement and

homogeneity spurred by the modernist movement. As noted, in *Arts Magazine* it wasn't until the late

1970s that his critique became part of a larger "architectural reappraisal" addressing the "ideological

crisis caused by the failures of the Modern Movement's aims." [106] As previously addressed, Tschumi has

written much on the disjunction between activity, building form, and place identity. By analyzing human

activity and events at urban and building scales, Tschumi seeks an architecture that relishes in action

and emotion. His belief that "architecture finds itself in a unique situation: [as] the only discipline that

by definition combines concept and experience, image and use, image and structure"[107] suggests that he

is wholly aware of the multiple perceptions and opportunities for architectural practice. Perhaps, as a

means to consider the fragmentation and lack of sense of place fostered by our contemporary

condition, the work of Tschumi stands out for its reference not only to place making through activity,

---

[105] Ibid., 259.

[106] Kate Linker, "Bernard Tschumi: Architecture, Eroticism, and Art," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 3 (November 1978): 107.

[107] Bernard Tschumi, "The Architecture of the Event," *Architectural Design: A.D.* 62, no. 1/2 (February 1992): 27.

but also his focus on a multidisciplinary process. In the interest of this exploration, Tschumi's work

provides an accessible segue in which to begin looking at more radical architecture as well as installation

art.

Bernard Tschumi's perspective on architecture was strongly influenced by the myriad uprising

and demonstrations that occurred during the late 1960s. The protests were far reaching, with a various

specific goals in mind such as civil rights and women's rights, and the lasting impact was a rejection of

the previous status quo and a drive for change from what many saw as an oppressive capitalist system.

Like others from his post-1968 generation, he tried to {verify start of quote}"question all those received

ideas of what architecture was."[108] This met against the perceived resistance by the traditional

framework for architecture, because up to that point, it had been seen more as a reflection of socio-

economic and political conditions rather than as a catalyst for social change. [109] Tschumi and his

contemporaries believed, however, that while the architect cannot necessarily determine the outcome

of social change, he or she "can help to initiate or accelerate a set of actions" [110] which may lead to

developments inspiring improvement in the social condition. Essentially, Tschumi felt that

"[a]rchitecture and its spaces do not change society, but through architecture and the understanding of

its effect, we can accelerate processes of change underway."[111]

These hypotheses regarding the social impact of architecture stems from or led to Tschumi's

focus on "the event." In regard to the pivotal protests of 1968 throughout Europe and the United

States, he proposed that those events "could not have happened in that particular way without that

particular place." [112] This focus on architecture as a place for events to occur has become the hallmark of

---

[108] Omar Khan and Dorita Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," *Journal of Architectural Education* (n.d.): 52.
[109] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 5.
[110] Enrique Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," *Grey Room* no. 17 (Fall 2004): 119.
[111] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 15.
[112] Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," 120.

Tschumi's writing, critique, and practice. By understanding this relationship between place and activity, Tschumi saw that "[t]he event is the place where the rethinking and reformulation of the different elements of architecture (many of which have resulted in, or added to, contemporary social iniquities) may lead to their solution."[113] Considering events that disrupt the social order may usher in a new era of architecture by seeing new possibility for the use of space:

> "there is no social or political change without the movements and programs that transgress supposedly stable institutionality, architectural or otherwise; that there is no architecture without everyday life, movement, and action; and that it is the most dynamic aspects of their disjunctions that suggest a new definition architecture."[114]

The study of activity and events, and the belief that new ways of seeing architecture by looking at the events that occurred in those spaces became the focus of Tschumi's work. His "hypothesis was that architecture was both the space and what happens in it." [115] It would appear from the readings, however, that his emphasis was less on the form of the space and more the actions and events of the user. Tschumi did not feel that architecture could exist without events, action, activities, or function and that the spaces to support those events must be arranged without hierarchy, since their importance was of equal measure. [116] Admittedly, Tschumi realized that regardless of the design of the building, and consideration for the programmatic event, the outcome was still unpredictable,[117] but one gets a sense that this aspect of unpredictability was something that the architect yearned for.

Clear distinctions are laid out by Tschumi on the difference between "program" and "event," since one could argue that a program looks at the combination of activities in a building as a design driver for the space. But Tschumi sought to reconsider the traditional idea of program since he saw it as "a clumsy list of square meters defining banal activities like the bathroom, kitchen, living room, dining

---

[113] Tschumi, "The Architecture of the Event," 27.
[114] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 23.
[115] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 53.
[116] Tschumi, "The Architecture of the Event," 25.
[117] Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," 119.

room, and so on."[118] Program speaks to a predictable ideal and does not provide for the unexpected

and unpredictable events that Tschumi favors. Unlike the somewhat static idea of a building program,

Tschumi saw events as the "new programmatic, functional, or social relations [created] through the

spectacle of everyday life."[119] By realizing architecture that considers the uniqueness of events and

activities, one may be able to design spaces that are "perceived more as a dynamic space-in-flux than as

a fixed and enduring object." [120]

One way that Tschumi had hoped architecture could facilitate events of social change was

through the use of "shock." His idea of shock was to combine the unlikely programs within spaces, and

also create a constant juxtaposition of programs and events. Shock can be used to rattle the status quo,

to make us question the litany of images that appear before us which perpetuate societal hierarchies,

and see our surroundings in a new way. By revealing a new, shocking environment, we may question

our place in that environment, thereby precipitating some type of social change. Tschumi believes that

"architecture is not necessarily about comfort […] but is also about advancing society and its

development, [and] the device of shock may be an indispensible tool." [121]

One way that shock can be implemented into a space is through the juxtaposition of events for

it is this "unlikely combination of events and spaces" that "challenge[s] both the function and the

space." [122] As mentioned previously when discussing disjunction of event and place, this juxtaposition

may happen when events occur in buildings designed for purposes other than their original intent.

Large, urban environments like New York City, with a diversity and density unique to the United States,

contain numerous examples of this juxtaposition and disjunction of event and space. Our technological

world is constantly reinforcing this juxtaposition, since we are given the opportunity to participate in all

---

[118] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 53.
[119] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 22.
[120] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 52.
[121] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 247.
[122] Ibid., 255.

types of activities regardless of our physical setting (i.e. watching a movie in a park on an iPad). The

nature of this technology, however, is very personal. The experience is intended for the single user, so

instead of creating unique events in space as Tschumi advocates through shock, we are deadened to the

shock by being mentally removed from the place itself. No longer is architecture only competing with

the images conveying an idea of the city's order, but also encountering the added complexity of our

individual psychological removal from the space.

In the belief of Tschumi and many others, the modernists sought a utopian solution for all of

humanity, which could be achieved though rationality. Architecture played an important role in this

quest for utopia, and was in stark contrast "to our current occupation with multiple, fragmented,

dislocated terrains." [123] In Tschumi's work, we see the goal not being for a fixed utopia, but rather a

series of heterotopias consisting of contradictions and unpredictability. He said, "I am interested in the

heterogeneity of the work, even in the contradictions within a single project. Homogeneity is precisely

what I am trying to get away from." [124]

Analyzing movement through space became a way of understanding how to provide a place for

events to take place. In some of Tschumi's notable "paper architecture" projects, his work centered on

the analysis of movement, conflict and activity. In the *Manhattan Transcriptsi* (see Figure 2), he looked

at the layering and superimposition of multiple frameworks as a means of blurring the distinction

between structure, form, event, and image. [125] "The Transcripts takes as its starting point today's

inevitable disjunction between use, form and social values. It argues that when this condition becomes

an architectural confrontation, a new relation of pleasure and violence inevitably occurs."[126] By

analyzing the activities of life in this way, one may be able to develop new types of architecture that are

---

[123] Tschumi, "The Architecture of the Event," 26.
[124] Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," 123.
[125] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 251.
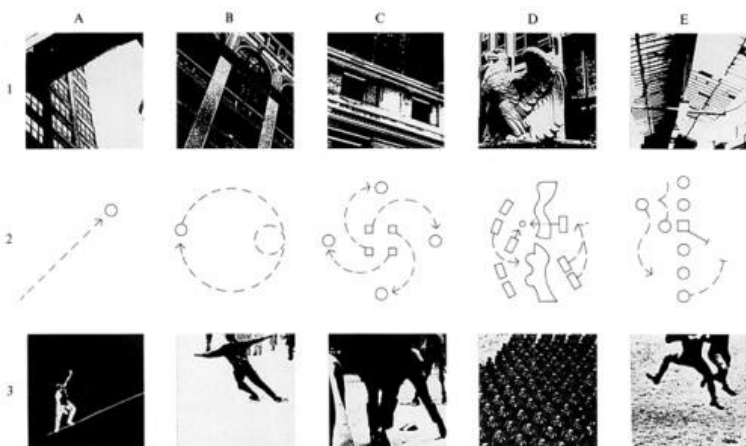[126] Tschumi, *Bernard Tschumi*, 98.

built out of the movement of bodies through space. After all, according to Tschumi, "[b]odies not only move in, but generate spaces produced by and through their movements."[127]

Education has been an important part of Tschumi's work, as he held a strong belief that the "architect- theoretician" and the "architect-designer" should be merged.[128] And his teaching at the Architectural Association in London during the 1970s was no exception. At the time, "his interests lay in aesthetic performances, influenced by the historical avant-garde, constructivist cinema, situationist practices, as well as conceptual and performance art,"[129] and his students explored these ideas through his class "Theory, Languages, and Attitudes."[130] His classes looked beyond the established framework of architecture, instead turning attention to the margins of practice.[131] Specifically, they looked to performance art as a means of exploring space, "[n]ot to imitate their work but translate and transport it into architecture."[132] His teaching and collaboratively motivated academic exploration was very influential, and the students at this time became known as the London Conceptualists.

The socio-political climate in London at the time was ripe for a new way of looking at the world. A recession had left many unemployed and provided an urban environment riddled with abandoned

Figure 2. Tschumi, Bernard. *Manhattan Transcripts*.
From: Bernard Tschumi Architects, http://www.tschumi.com/media/files/00562.jpg (accessed December 10, 2012).

---

[127] Tschumi, "Architecture and Limits II," 45.
[128] Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," 126.
[129] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 52.
[130] S. KAJI-O'GRADY, "The London Conceptualists," *Journal of Architectural Education* 61, no. 4 (2008): 45.
[131] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 52.
[132] Ibid., 53.

buildings. The London Conceptualists blamed much of the inequality at the time on the lax and somewhat corrupt regulation of corporate interests, and saw a role in bringing attention to these issues by reevaluating space and the role of architecture. "The allegiances of the London Conceptualists were the individual over the powerful institution, the abandoned building over the large-scale commercial development, and the imagination of economic rationality."[133] The London Conceptualists were not alone in their thinking, as evidenced by the emergence of British punk music which was also responding to similar socio-political concerns.[134]

Instead of only producing theoretical architecture, to align themselves more with the goals of the movement they "were convinced it was necessary to physically insert themselves within investigative scenarios in order to move from theory to praxis." [135] Abandoned buildings provided an excellent opportunity to explore their ideas as an exhibition space, but also as a larger symbol of the challenging socio-economic climate. [136] With a focus on movement and activity in space, combined with a desire for physicality, Tschumi's Architectural Association class combined forces with performance artist, RoseLee Goldberg.

RoseLee Goldberg's work focused heavily on the concept of space. She believed that the idea of space was inherent to all art, but points out that, "[m]uch of conceptual art, when presented as either 'land,' 'body,' or 'performance' art implied indirectly or directly a particular attitude to and investigation of the experience of space."[137] For her one goal of performance art was "intended to divert the conventional function of the gallery as 'showing objects' by using it as a place to experience

---

[133] KAJI-O'GRADY, "The London Conceptualists," 50.
[134] Ibid., 44.
[135] Ibid., 50.
[136] Ibid., 44.
[137] RoseLee Goldberg, "Space as Praxis," in *Theories of Contemporary Art /*, by Richard Hertz, 2nd ed. (Prentice Hall,, 1993), 254.

experience."[138] This type of disjunction and shock fits very conveniently into Tschumi's work and relates

to his goal of having architecture designed around experience. We can see why "[t]he spatial

performativity of Tschumi's architecture continues to intersect with performance practices."[139]

Performance art, according to Goldberg, provided a means for conceptual exploration, an added value

for students "unable to build their ideas"[140]

      Tschumi, through the collaboration with RoseLee Goldberg experimented with performance art

and architecture as a new way to experience space. "The parallel made between the dancers'

movements and the more traditional means of defining and articulating space, such as walls or columns,

is important."[141] By looking at architecture through the lens of performance art, the students were

encouraged to pursue creative and imaginative directions. They combined efforts to produce a show

called, "Space: A Thousand Words." Goldberg described the intention of the architectural and

performance art as "go[ing] beyond these categories and bring[ing] together different sensibilities and

preoccupations, not in order to create false relationships between them, but to hold the ideas up to one

another, as from a distance."[142] The show was comprised of performances as well as objects drawn in a

sketch style indicative of performance art based architecture. "In the beginning it was mainly about

choreographic movements -- literally the movement of bodies in space -- in their infinite variations."[143]

This effort provided evidence of the "portability and translatability of techniques and ideas between

architecture and art,"[144] but ultimately, the show's "contributions were fragmentary and enigmatic, and

---

[138] Ibid., 261.
[139] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 52.
[140] KAJI-O'GRADY, "The London Conceptualists," 46.
[141] Tschumi, *Bernard Tschumi*, 21.
[142] Goldberg, "Space as Praxis," 251.
[143] Walker, "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker," 122.
[144] KAJI-O'GRADY, "The London Conceptualists," 44.

the exhibition as a whole lacked an explicit or coherent ambition."[145] Despite the successful careers of

many of the artists and architects who participated in the show, it was largely forgotten. [146]

Bernard Tschumi holds strong ideas about collaborative projects. As we learn in an interview

with Kahn and Hannah, he has significant trouble with the word, collaboration, and what it connotes

with regard to collaborative projects:

> "I do not like the word to start with. I do not necessarily like the idea of two people coming together with their autonomous disciplines and starting to bring them together... I really have a problem with the notion of disciplinary fields. I know they exist, but collaborations always implied a static means of bringing together the static order of one kind with the static order of another... I was very interested in crossovers in mixed media."[147]

In essence, not unlike his appeal for an architecture that considers form, program, activity, and event in

a non hierarchical manner, he advocates for a collaborative process that allows influence to permeate

all participants equally, and not be relished to defined ideas of discipline.

What we see from Tschumi's thesis and writing is a focus on the activities and movements of

people in space. The modern movement strived for a world in which the concept of utopia was the goal.

Tschumi challenges that idea by proposing an architecture which sets in motion events that could

potentially precipitate social change by upsetting the perceived social order. While he does not suggest

that architecture, in and of itself, can change society, he believes that our environment can be designed

in a way that supports societal change. Modernists believed that there was a universal solution for

society's shortcomings, and often found that solution in technological advancement (see Le Corbusier's

"machine for living") but this universal ideal does not suit the reality of the human condition. Tschumi

analyzed the activities of daily life by recording movement and conflict, revealing the stories of human

life not unlike a film. This analysis justifies an architecture based upon the creation of space for events

---

[145] Ibid., 48.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Khan and Hannah, "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi," 54.

that provide meaning in our lives. Tschumi's work provides a lens through which we might be able to understand our relationship with space. He shows us the disjunctions between space and activity, disjunctions that contribute to a sense of fragmentation, but ultimately serve to create the types of unexpected heterotopias that mirror reality which Tschumi advocates, where multiple ideas can be expressed and uniformity of ideal is rejected. Considering Tschumi's perspective becomes fundamental in questioning our present condition as it allows us to explore post-modern ideas, questioning our relationship to technology and the relationship between our activities and the places in which they occur. Our technology frees us from place, but does it do so at the expense of the place-requiring events that Tschumi describes?

4.3 Superstudio: Radical, Italian Neo-Avant Garde Architects

"*If design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois models of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities... until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture...* "[148] – Antonio Natalini, co-founder of Superstudio

Figure 3. The Members of Superstudio.
From: Superstudio Life Without Objects. Milano: Skira, 2003. Page 149.

Superstudio was formed out of the Superarchitecture exhibit held in Florence, Italy in 1966 by a group of young architects whose aim was to reject the universality of modernism and the

---

[148] Adolfo Natalini, "Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux... a Statement" (Lecture, AA School of Architecture, london, March 3, 1971), 167.

commoditization of design. Group included Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Gian Piero

Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, and Roberto Magris (figure #). Unofficially, this architectural movement

is known as the Italian Neo-Avant Garde and sometimes referred to as "achitettura radical" or radical

architecture. [149] Much of their work went unrealized, mostly because of its fantastically surreal nature,

revealing the flaws in the modernist utopian goal by hyperbolically and ironically using architectural

language against itself. Superstudio chose to "remain virtually within the discipline of architecture,

producing 'self-critical' objects and images." [150] Ross Elfline wrote that the group was heavily inspired by

local Piper Clubs – black box discos where the relationships and behavior of the attendees shaped the

experience of the space. [151] They chose to challenge modernism's agenda by turning it against itself, and

reflecting upon the discos, promoting an architecture that celebrated the movement and activities of

every man.

Superstudio and similar groups are often referred to as radical architects. This term, however,

presents some problems since it has become a bit of a catchall for any type of non-mainstream

architecture that sought to reject the status quo and explore the realities of their time. Bernard

Tschumi referred to this noticeable shift in architecture from the material to immaterial as characteristic

of the entire postmodern period and not specifically unique to any one group of so-called radical

architects. [152] Tschumi further extends this definition by suggesting that radical architects "explored the

destruction of culture and its artifacts." [153] In the case of Superstudio, the group understood the modern

movement as well as globalization to be forces working against society's distinct cultures and designed

objects that possessed true meaning for their owner or user. Ultimately, the challenge that exists in

---

[149] Marie Theres Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias," trans. Fiona Elliott, *AA Files* no. 47 (2002): 25.
[150] Ross Elfline, "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture," *Footprint* no. 8 (Spring 2011): 61.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Tschumi, *Bernard Tschumi*, 17.
[153] Ibid.

defining radical architecture can be blamed on the many different opinions on the subject and the fact

that the different groups did not necessarily possess a consistent through line. [154]

In the context of this thesis, I have chosen to look at the work of Superstudio as a precedent for

using irony and hyperbole to critique design and societal conditions. My intent for this research is to

show how Superstudio's work used self-critique as a means of analyzing the state of architecture and

society during the post-war period in Italy. They proposed that modernism and the International Style

sought to impose a uniform design solution globally, rendering authenticity and meaning irrelevant. In

their postmodern view, attention instead should be turned to the individual and their relationships

within space. The modern, universal ideal created a fragmented reality in which the architecture of

cities did not align with the activities that took place within. As mentioned previously, it is my belief that

information and communications technology is having a similar impact on our built environment. These

devices change the types of relationships we have with each other and with our surroundings. By

reviewing the work of Superstudio and the conditions that inspired their design exploration, I hope to

find precedent for my design work challenging the contemporary condition mediated by personal ICTs.

Not only did this Italian Neo-Avant Garde group have the potential to inspire an abstract way of looking

at this problem, but they also possessed a uniquely artistic way of communicating their ideas, working

within the accepted dissemination framework to expose its flaws. And finally, Superstudio underscored

the value of the interior design of a building citing, "[t]he appointments of the building's interior are not

extrinsic to architecture, but rather of primary importance to the discipline, especially when one

accounts for the profound effects that such environments have on their users' bodies and psyches."[155]

In post-war Italy, architects could pursue their trade in one of two potential directions, both

unappealing to the young Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia who formed Superstudio. On

---

[154] Peter Lang and William Menking, "Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives," in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003), 14.
[155] Elfline, "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture," 61.

the one hand, you could design for the up and coming bourgeois class, a group that the Marxist influenced designers did not hold in high regard, claiming that the Capitalist reconstruction efforts benefiting this class left many in poverty; or two, design affordable, government housing projects which were usually closely associated with insider real estate development deals. [156] Despite these opportunities, the building industry in Italy was suffering a recession between 1965 and 1969. [157] The combination of the construction slowdown with an unappealing client pool provided the impetus for Superstudio to create a number of paper architecture projects exploring their nascent ideas of counter-design.

As mentioned earlier, the members of Superstudio were critiquing, among other things, the primary tenants of the modern movement. By the 1960s the once revolutionary design ideals of this movement had become static, predictable, and uninspired. [158] They saw the modernist design goal as one of imposing a design "solution" upon individuals as opposed the design originating from the individual. They "aimed, by contrast, at a world without design objects, intended to increase consumers' ability to design their own behaviors."[159] Their work was also a response to the rise in globalization which spread uniformity around the world, trading access to goods and capitalism for cultural distinctiveness. The modern condition of speed, commoditization, consumption, and lack of meaning became the group's core issues.[160] "[T]hey were ironic about the secularization of design objects, and highly critical of the loss of the symbolic, as well as the shift to mere fast consumption devoid of any communicative value whatsoever beyond its indicative market and status value." [161]

---

[156] Ibid., 60.

[157] Fernando Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," *Footprint* no. 8 (Spring 2011): 28.

[158] "Anti-matter," *The Guardian*, September 23, 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2003/mar/31/architecture.artsfeatures.

[159] Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," 32.

[160] Peter Lang, "Suicidal Desires," in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003), 49.

[161] Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," 25.

Their views were certainly not unique to them as many of their contemporaries in art and architecture at the time felt similarly. We see similar agendas and ideals held by their Florentine colleagues, Archizoom, Londoners, Archigram, and others. Students of architecture, like those who formed Superstudio were influenced by the work of the Situationists, Kevin Lynch, Body Art, Happenings, Conceptual Art, and Land Art. [162] Additionally, their influence was not confined to Italy, since their work was disseminated throughout design magazines and they spoke at colleges such as the Architectural Association in London. The globalization which they criticized ultimately gave them an influential voice.

One could argue that the socio-economic influences that led to the experimental work of Superstudio exist again today. As Peter Lang and William Menkling compare, "we are again at a point where the convergence of technology and consumerism, in its current so-called free market state is spinning steadily out of control." [163] It would also be remiss to not acknowledge the similarities between our current ongoing global recession and its impact on the building industry similar to that which was occurring at Superstudio's inception. [164] Most important to this review, however, is the changing relationship to space brought on by modernization and technology and how it can fracture our experience with the built environment and each other. Industrial modernism of the 20th century, according to radical architects like Superstudio, revealed a lack of humanity and meaning in design. Our modern condition of instantaneous global connectivity, constant access to products, and commoditization of relationships and information may be creating conditions mirroring those challenged by groups like Superstudio.

The Superstudio radicals also rebelled against the trend towards space that is moveable, transformable and variable, instead seeking a return to the permanence and beauty of architecture, one

---

[162] Ibid., 24–25.
[163] Lang and Menking, "Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives," 12–13.
[164] Ibid.

that is less about "mobility, functionality, [and] usability." [165] Adolfo Natalini suggested that "there is an

effort to move what is still, without trying to stop that which is moving too much,"[166] and this thinking

was very much in line with Superstudio's quest to find meaning in architecture in a world of rapid

globalization and modernization. Instead, Natalini and his Superstudio colleagues understood the

variability of architecture to come from how it was used. "We already move about enough ourselves to

render the architecture variable, changing its relationships with the passing of time, with the changing

of the seasons and life." [167]

This reference to relationships and the behavior of people in space became a common theme in

Superstudio's work. Piero Frassinelli, another member of the Superstudio recalled, "I always sought a

'skinless' architecture, an architecture in which the outside arises from the inside, straight out of the

inner life of the men who live in it."[168] They saw the "ideal" modernist city as a "repressive system" that

did not allow account for the "ebb and flow and minutiae of our daily lives."[169, 170] Similar to the work of

Bernard Tschumi, Superstudio placed more importance on the activities that occurred inside the

building and less on the tectonics of the architecture itself. [171] One way Superstudio proposed revealing

a reconnection between man and his relationship with others and his surroundings was through the

removal of consumer objects which were usually designed. "[W]ith greed, want, and status anxiety

removed from the social milieu, thanks to the eradication of all consumer objects, individuals would be

able to devote more time to interpersonal relationships, to their physical environment, and to their own

[165] Adolfo Natalini, "A House of Calm Serentiy," in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003), 74.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid., 75.
[168] Piero Frassinelli, "Journey to the End of Architecture," in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003), 83.
[169] Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," 30.
[170] Elfline, "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture," 59.
[171] Ibid., 61.

bodies."[172] To them, utopia existed as a place without consumer objects, where meaning could be realized through relationships.

The concept of utopia has been used in various architecturally based critique as a means of highlighting society's unsolved problems.[173] Modernists were no exception in that many were searching for an ideal, universal design language that could be implemented in any condition to solve the challenges of that community. The focus was on problem solving through technology and less on whimsy and meaning. Design became the means to achieve the modern utopia. While it is presumptuous to assume that Superstudio believed utopia possible, their goals for society exposed utopian ideals. In their utopian vision, they hoped to "re-establish a cultural relationship and not only an economic one between objects and users." [174] They sought a "revolutionary society […] through the phase of radical, concrete criticism of the present society – of its way of producing, consuming, living."[175] This criticism would come in the form of dystopian visions. By hyperbolically presenting the modernist, utopian ideal, Superstudio created fractured and fragmented dystopias in an attempt to question and undermine the value of this unachievable vision. "In a clear dystopian fashion, they claimed a new form of material culture in the oxymoron of information society: a techno-utopia emptied of objects."[176] This dystopian vision is most notably evidenced in their work, *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas* and *The Continuous Monument*.

---

[172] Ibid., 70.
[173] Natalini, "Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux... a Statement," 166.
[174] Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," 24.
[175] Natalini, "Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux... a Statement," 167.
[176] Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," 25.
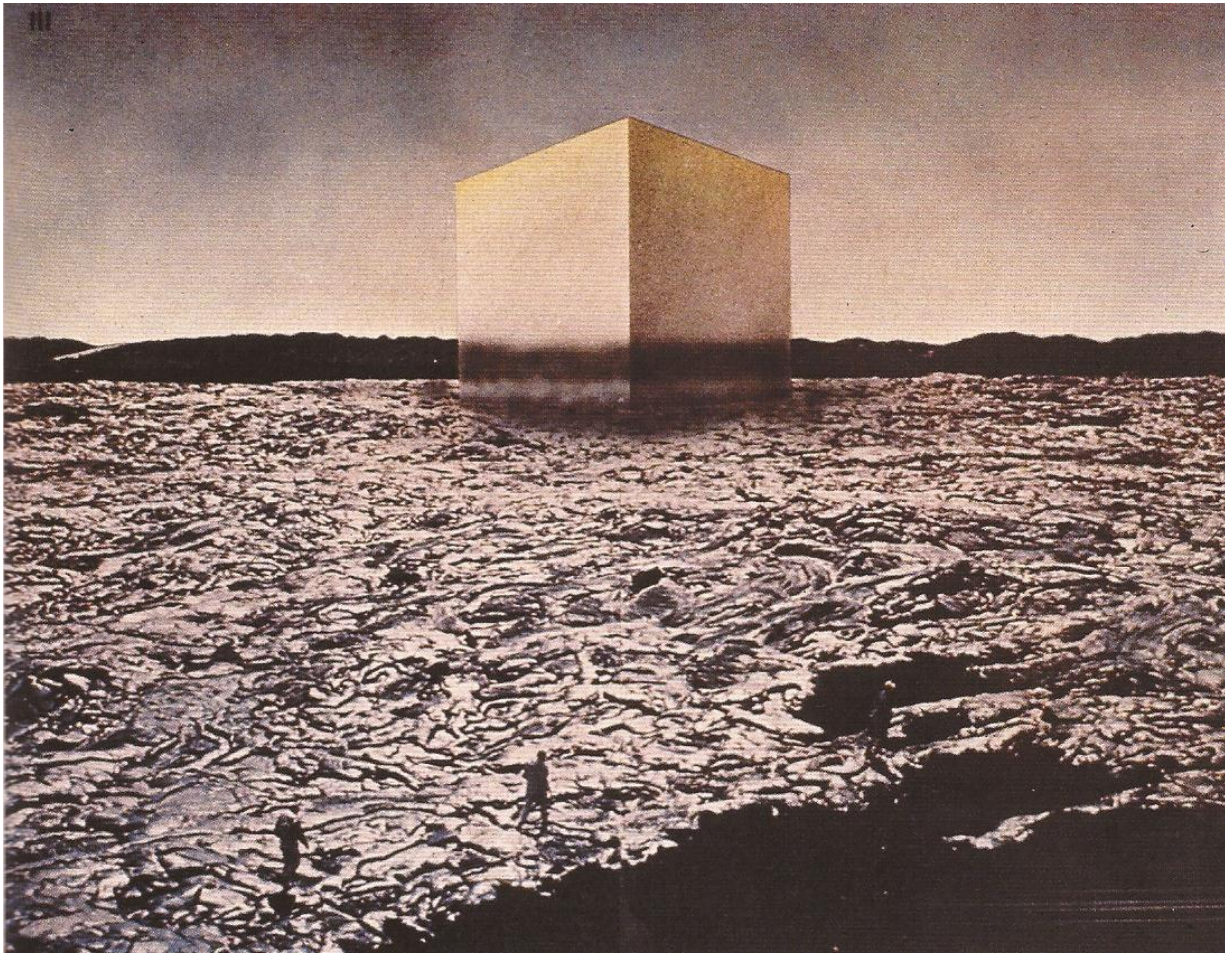
Figure 4. Third City in the Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas: New York of Brains.
From: Superstudio Life Without Objects. Milano: Skira, 2003. Page 151.

Superstudio found much fault with our reliance on technology and "focus[ed] on the absurd consequences of [its] evolution."[177] Unlike other radical architects like Britian's, Archigram, "Superstudio saw 1960s technologia as a malevolent force." [178] In their project, *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas*, they presented multiple "ideal" cities, each of which emphasizes another aspect of technology and the "looming effects of the Americanization of European culture." [179] The third city, for instance, is called "New York of Brains," and it is described as "a cube, with a length, width and height of 180 feet, covered in quartz tiles measuring 10x10 inches." The 10x10 panels cover corresponding cubes

---

[177] Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias," 32.
[178] "Anti-matter."
[179] Lang and Menking, "Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives," 23.

that hold the brains of New Yorkers whose bodies were rotting after an explosion. The city produces its own energy and the description contains many more details of its function including the ability of the brains to "reach absolute knowledge" while witnessing humanity's destruction, "unable to do anything to accelerate it, or to delay it."[180] This work uses ironic hyperbole as a means of critiquing society's belief that modern, technological innovation is the true way to achieve salvation. In the end, it is revealed that the twelve city descriptions are a test, written to reinforce the irony of the cities in the first place. Depending on which cities you "would like to come true" your answers reveal that you are either a "dark, human cavity into which the system has penetrated, a 'golem,' a slave, or a worm."

The visuals accompanying the *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas* were created in what became Superstudio's hallmark medium: photo collage. [181] The influence of Archigram's pop art iconography and the collage art by Eduardo Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton are evident in Superstudio's work. The medium of collage, in and of itself, called attention to the irony of the work as it juxtaposed unlikely images against each other, reinforcing the self-critique. Collage was also a reflection of their multi-disciplinary practice. They often "tested the boundaries between architecture, the visual arts, and theory,"[182] juxtaposing differing perspectives in order to communicate an idea. This is also evidenced in the course that the members of Superstudio taught to college architecture students which blurred the boundaries of art and architecture. [183]

The Superstudio group believed that designers played a role in creating the fragmentation and consumer-driven inequality that defines the modern era. Because of this, founding member Torelado di Francia proclaimed, "it is the designer who must attempt to re-evaluate his role in the nightmare he has

---

[180] Peter Lang and William Menking, *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003), 152.
[181] Elfline, "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture," 64.
[182] Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias," 25.
[183] Ibid., 30.

helped to conceive."[184] They attempted to remedy the ills of the modern era by using architecture and design as a form of self-critique. Bernard Tschumi explains, "[t]his nihilistic prerequisite to social and economic change was a desperate attempt to use the architects' mode of expression to denounce institutional trends by translating them into architectural terms, ironically 'verifying where the system was going' by designing the cities of a desperate future."[185] By creating a surrealist architecture, they were able to critique and identify the problems of their current architectural era. It was the over-planning and over-simplification of the International Style and modernism that they rejected. Through using a recognizable architectural language, yet not conceivably "design" in the common sense of the word, they were able to develop a counter-design or anti-architecture.

The most frequent method for creating this self-referential anti-architecture was through the use of hyperbole and irony. It was by taking their ideas to an extreme that the architects hoped to find meaning in their work. This notion of hyperbole is mentioned in Tschumi's book, *Architecture and Disjunction*, as a means of finding reason and experience, "[t]he ultimate pleasure of architecture is that impossible moment when an architectural act, brought to excess, reveals both the traces of reason and the immediate experience of space."[186] The use of irony in their work allowed them to "dilute the dominance of the rational in order to reintroduce the poetry of the irrational and the whimsical."[187] This strategy allowed their work to contain critique and meaning which was conveniently layered beneath a visually pleasing composition.[188] The ironic and hyperbolic nature of their work, aside from delivering a critique of the modern status quo, encouraged the viewer to consider their role in changing it, creating

---

[184] "Anti-matter."
[185] Tschumi, *Bernard Tschumi*, 25.
[186] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 89.
[187] Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias," 29.
[188] Lang, "Suicidal Desires," 46.

light hearted observation which permitted "retreat[ing] back to the comfort of our real homes, our

heavy objects, our annoying lives"[189] without guilt.

One of Superstudio's most well known designs, and presumably the one that afforded them the

luxury of creating much of their "paper architecture" that was presumably not very profitable at the

time, was Quaderna (figure #). The furniture was designed for manufacturer, Zanotta in 1970 and is still available today.[190] This particular line of furniture utilized Superstudio's hallmark geometric grid pattern as a plastic laminate finish. The grid, as we'll see in *The Continuous Monument*, was a way of ironically imposing the modernist grid in what they had hoped would be a "non-

Figure 5. Superstudio, Quaderna Table.
1970, plastic laminate finish, various sizes. Available from:
unicahome.com (accessed November 30, 2012.)

designed," hyper simplistic, overtly rational collection of furniture. Conversely, today, the tables are not

a design for the masses, but instead sell for thousands of dollars and have found their way into the

collections at design museums around the world.

Il Monumento Continuo, or the Continuous Monument (figure #), is another Superstudio project

that highlights their use of hyperbole and irony.   This photo collage series of images depicts a large,

white-gridded form (monument) inhabiting cities and landscapes across the globe. The uniform grid of

the monument's surface is symbolic of "modernism's resolute search for perfection and purity [which]

was parodied in hyperbolic display of pure monumentality."[191] This work spoke to Superstudio's core

---

[189] Ibid., 47.
[190] "Quaderna 2600," *Zanotta Design*, accessed November 24, 2012,
http://www.zanotta.it/#/en/products/tables/2600_quaderna_2600.htm.
[191] Elfline, "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture," 66.

belief that the direction of architecture and design, in light of globalization, was uniform, homogeneity that lacked any unique, local cultural relevance. [192, 193]   The Continuous Monument was representational of this globalizing sameness, "[e]ventually, t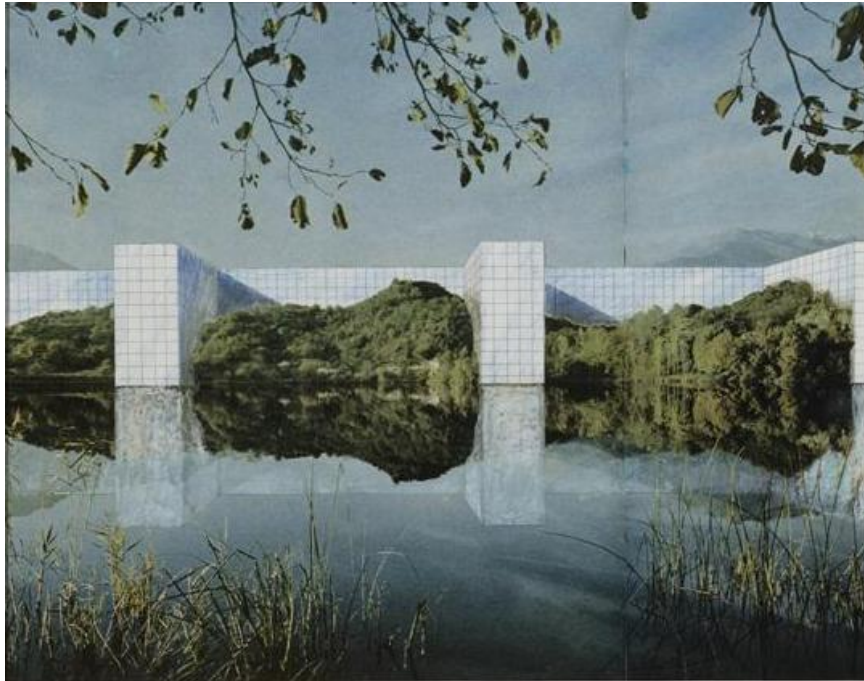his structure, Il Monumento Continuo, would cover the entire surface of the planet, leaving the Earth as featureless as the smoothest desert, or, more to the point, as a willfully low-brow, suburban-style western city."[194] Similar to their other projects, the ironic scenes depicted in The Continuous Monument provide a clever and somewhat humorous critique of what they saw as

Figure 6. The Continuous Monument: On the River, Project Perspective.
Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Allessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Gian Piero Frassinelli, and Adolfo Natalini, 1969, photo montage, 17 ¼ x 15 ¾. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Available from: ARTStor, artstor.org (accessed Nov 30, 2012).

the flaws of an architecture that focused not on the uniqueness of locale or on the people who used the spaces, but instead on functionality, efficiency, and rationality. The Continuous Monument reinforces the notion of fragmentation in modern, technologically advanced societies where commoditization of design is favored over design that fosters relationships, and we inhabit spaces that are not connected specifically to who and where we are.

---

[192] "Anti-matter," -.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

Like other postmodernists, the founders of Superstudio were searching for a meaningful response to the neglect they encountered from Modernism and the International Style. They were concerned with the way in which interactions and the activities of building occupants could transform spaces and environments, and felt that a universally homogenous design solution overlooked the importance of regionalism and uniqueness of experience. Through a series of surreal paper architecture projects, they explored the use of irony and hyperbole to provide a scathing self-critique of modern design's direction. Superstudio has been analyzed in the context of this thesis for two reasons. One, their concern over the role of technology as a place homogenizing agent mirrors similar concerns that information and communication technology undermines a sense of place by fragmenting activity and space. Second, their exploration of these concepts using paper architecture projects and multidisciplinary approaches provides inspiration for a contemporary project looking at similar issues and concerns. Their work proves that it is possible to examine an idea, inspire a dialogue through engaging art, and question the status quo within the field of architecture without actually having to create architecture, per se. In this way, my goal for [project name] is to explore the issue of ICT mediated fragmentation of experience in interior space by implementing ideas such as irony and hyperbole inspired by the work of Superstudio into a multidisciplinary installation that actively engages its visitors.

5. METHODOLOGY AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THESIS DESIGN PROJECT

5.1 Installation Art as Methodology for conceptual exploration of Interior Design Topics

For this project, installation art will be used as a means of exploring a fragmented sense of interior place due in large part to present-day information and communication technology. Installation art often has a strong relationship to the built environment, and a precedent exists of architects using

this medium as a way of exploring concepts to a level unfitting of a typical client directed, built project. With regard to technology, installation art often incorporates the latest technology as a means of creating viewer experience, but also as the subject of critique. Some critics referenced below decidedly feel that installation art's rise in popularity is a direct result of the disconnectedness that we feel living in a modern, technologically advanced society, and that this form of expression has a way of reconnecting people to an "actual" experience. It is my hope that by referencing installation art in both the broadest sense as well as a brief focus on its use by architects, that I will establish justification for using this as a means of exploring the topic of this thesis.

Establishing the history of installation art and all of the forces that impacted its development is beyond the scope of this section of the thesis paper, but some attempt will be made at defining this art medium in the interest of a common terminology. This section will also attempt to identify the similarities between installation art and interior design and architecture as well as show how this art can be used as a means of analyzing and exploring contemporary issues and the human condition. Finally, this section will include reference to how architects have used installation art for conceptual exploration.

The idea of installation art, especially with regard to site-specific installations is not necessarily a new phenomenon in the art world. In fact, some may argue that installation art has been with us since early humans painted on the walls of their caves. [195] But, it is contemporary installation art, engaging the viewer in new ways, challenging their relationship to their surroundings, inspired by and evolved from the postmodern contemporary art movements of the 20th century, which is of most interest to this research. Many point to the early work of Macel Duchamp as the impetus for contemporary installation art. His piece, "Fountain," utilizing a purchased urinal as a "readymade" sculpture turned the focus

---

[195] Mark Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art* (Munich: Prestel, 2003), 23.

away from the art object itself instead directing attention to the process of the artist and the experience of the viewer. These notions are integral foundations in defining installation art.

It is difficult to not use the word, "experience" when describing installation art. Often the intent of an installation is to evoke some type of experience for the viewer by essentially placing them within the art. Regardless of how immersive the artist created environment may be, the experience can be a static, one in which the viewer is observing their environment, or one that is more interactive either between the subject and the viewer, the viewer and the artist, or among viewers. These installation artists "create the world, the rules, and the aesthetic environment that viewers/users must navigate in order to define their experience." [196] Artists achieve this environment of experience "us[ing] any artistic means, including architecture, music, dance, and theater, along with the visual arts, to create a synesthetic environment"[197] (see Figure 7). Due to the broad range of materials and techniques used to generate the installation art experience, it is also inherently interdisciplinary, usually not relying solely on any one medium.

Figure 7. Glo atl study #2.
Atlanta based GloATL combines dance, architecture, and other devices for their site-specific installations. Source: lil' mitch. 2012, Digital Photo. Available from: Flickr, http://bit.ly/YBVOat (accessed December 1, 2012).

---

[196] *Act/React: Interactive Installation Art*, 1, includes DVD (Milwaukee Art Museum, 2008), 8.
[197] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 25.

The medium of installation art is flexible, "offering the broadest possibilities for investigation and expression." [198] And while, at times, it has been "denigrated as just one more form of postmodern spectacle," [199] it offers a unique opportunity to place the viewer inside the art, removing the objectified

constraints of a canvas on a wall or a sculpture on a pedestal. The viewer becomes part of the art, complicit in its meaning, creating an ephemeral experience that addresses the unique variability in subjective perspective. Mark Rosenthal offers a definition that speaks to both the phenomenological nature of installation as well as its broad variability by saying that it

Figure 8. Example of a site-specific installation.
Olafur Eliasson's Waterfalls Under Brooklyn Bridge. Source: Michael Daddino. 2008, Digital Photo. Available from: Flickr, http://bit.ly/SxEvUy (accessed November 30, 2012).

"refers to a dedicated space in which one artistic vision or aura is at work, setting forth various kinds of phenomena."[200]

As a means of categorizing installation art, Rosenthal offers two divisions: "filled-space installation" and "site-specific installation." These two broader categories are then broken down into further divisions: "enchantments, impersonations, interventions, and rapprochements" with the latter two belonging to site specific installation and the former related to filled-space installations.[201] Filled-space installations are not dependent on the surrounding site, while "site-specific installation is

---

[198] Ibid.
[199] C. Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* (2004): 63.
[200] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 26.
[201] Ibid., 27.

inextricably linked to the locale"[202] often using qualities or commenting on the surrounding environment (see Figure 8). Filled-space installations are those that can be installed (or occur) in multiple locations (see Figure 9). As with defining the medium itself, organizing it into neat compartments is equally challenging since much of the work straddles one type of installation or another.

Interactivity is often a key characteristic and goal of installation art and can occur on multiple levels, sometimes simultaneously. The most obvious perhaps, is 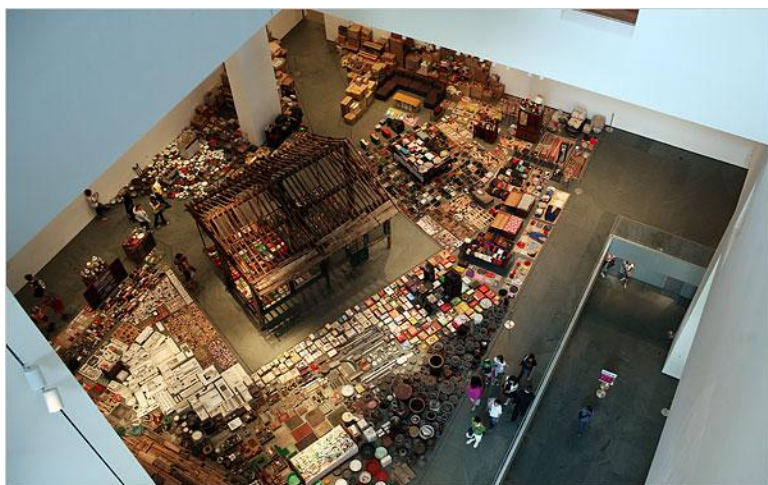the interaction between the viewer and the subject. This is not, however, limited to installation art since it is possible to experience some level of interaction with a sculpture or painting as well. As Judith Donath explains, "when we speak of something being interactive, we are talking about a system in which two or more interactive entities respond

Figure 9. Filled-space installation: Waste Not.
Song Dong. 2005-2009. Mixed Media Installation. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Available from: The New York Times Online, http://nyti.ms/SnBDbx (accessed November 30, 2012).

to one another." [203] Obviously, this responsive interaction is more difficult to achieve with static object art. Interaction via installation art can be very accessible: some change in the art occurs as a result of the behavior of the viewer; or, it could be more subtle in the way that the artist creates an installation that offers the viewer choices. In the latter, "[t]he artist and the viewer/user must work together to create the aesthetic experience."[204] When a visitor encounters this type of installation they are offered choices in how to experience the work, being guided by the artist, but ultimately the outcome of their

---

[202] Ibid., 28.
[203] Donath, "Technological Interventions in Everyday Interaction," 34.
[204] *Act/React*, 8.

experience is self-determined.[205] Often too, installation art seeks to encourage an "activated

spectatorship" which possesses as one of its goals a desire to create interactions and relationships

between viewers. "This type of work conceives of its viewing subject not as an individual who

experiences art in transcendent or existential isolation, but as a part of a collective or community."[206]

The work, in this case, embodies the qualities that encourage social interaction.[207]

As mentioned earlier, there is no defining material to installation art and, in fact, there is no

defining discipline. "Many artists are demonstrating that for them discrete worlds of art are not

adequate to express the complexities of this age, nor is the traditional exalted object appropriate for the present time."[208] This pursuit of an appropriate method for communicating complexity often leads to a multidisciplinary approach involving sound, performance, theatre, architecture, etc. By utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, artists are able to explore issues with

Figure 10. Tate Thames Dig.
Mark Dion. Tate Modern, London. Source: Tate Modern. 1999, Mixed Media.
http://bit.ly/QWI2yi (accessed Dec 01, 2012).

more depth while creating installations that are engaging to multiple human senses. One example of

this is the Tate Thames Dig by Mark Dion. In this work, Dion conducted an archaeological dig on the

banks on the Thames in London and then displayed the findings in the Tate Modern (see Figure 10). This

[205] Ibid., 7.
[206] Claire Bishop, *Installation Art* (Tate Publishing, 2011), 102.
[207] Donath, "Technological Interventions in Everyday Interaction," 37.
[208] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 86.

project is described in more detail when discussing Relational Aesthetics, but it is important to include

here as it underscores how interdisciplinary efforts can be used in art production and as a means of

engaging viewers. In this case, Dion used research and study of archaeology to "suggest… that art may

just as well involve epistemological research and study as the human or natural sciences."[209] Ross

continues her description of the work, "Dion presents art as a cross disciplinary adventure. There is little

question that Dion's work modifies any sense that art occupies a space of exception entirely cut off from

other practices or disciplinary fields."[210]

When viewing installation art through an interdisciplinary lens, a connection between this

medium and architecture and interior design becomes apparent. Additionally, installation art is often a

highly spatial experience, a key feature of architecture and interior design.[211] Installation art, in and of

itself, could be argued is a form of interior design, in that the artist is transforming an interior

environment in order to produce an effect. A conceptual idea or viewpoint should be present in both

commercial interior design projects and is evident in installation art. Fee, client, program, and code

restrictions are removed in installation art, allowing a more conceptual result to emerge. Historically,

artists have often crossed between art and design, and the inverse is also true. Café Aubette in

Strasbourg was redesigned by members of the De Stijl group from 1926-1928, showcasing how the work

of artists can effectively improve an interior environment while "introduce[ing] the idea of art (an art

installation) that effectively functioned in the world, an art that lived in the time of the everyday,

too."[212] Rosenthal used this as an example of site-specific installation art, but one could argue that this

type of endeavor easily falls into the field of interior design. Thus, the lines between installation art,

especially site-specific works, and interior design are nebulous.

---

[209] Toni Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," *Journal of Visual* 5, no. 3 (2006): 179.
[210] Ibid., 178.
[211] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 26.
[212] Ibid., 51.

Additional examples of the blurring of boundaries between site specific installation art and interior design are evidenced in the work of Siah Armajani who designed the Hirschorn Museum Employees Lounge and Jorge Pardo's design for the lobby of The Fabric Workshop and Museum. "[T]here is a reversal in these examples between traditional notions of art versus design: whereas in the past designers might have wanted to be called artists, here artists are happily embracing the identity of designer/architects."[213] Rosenthal refers to this type of site specific work as Rapprochement, and provides Art Nouveau as a historic example of this style, describing it as "the rapprochement between all the arts in one seamless ensemble." [214]

With this style of installation art, site is extremely important, as it is too for architectural work.

Architecture taking on the characteristics of installation art is also common. Modern

Figure 11. Blur Building.
Source: Norbert Aepli. 2002, Digital Photo. Available from: Wikipedia Commons, http://bit.ly/GB5xq (accessed Dec 1, 2012).

construction technology allows designers to create forms and ultimately experiences that mirror the more conceptual and less functional aesthetic of installation art. Markus Bruderlin, refers to this

---

[213] Ibid., 57.
[214] Ibid., 78.

relationship between art and architecture as ArchiSculpture in his book by the same name.[215] This type

of work enables architecture and interior design to take on the character of an installation by creating a

sense of experience and exploration. The designer, not unlike the installation artist, is providing the

space for the end users' experience to occur.   The space alone is not an experience, instead relying on

the interaction of its users. According to Liz Diller, "[a]side from keeping the rain out... architecture is

nothing but a special effects machine that delights and disturbs the senses."[216] And by "disturbing these

senses" an experience and potentially a conceptual meaning can emerge.

Figure 12. Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston – Digital Media Center.
Source: Frankphotos. 2008, Digital Photo. Available from: Flickr, http://bit.ly/RrUAwB (accessed December 1, 2012).

It goes without saying that site specific installations depend on physical space in order to convey their meaning. They provide a sense of attachment for the viewer to their surroundings, unlike what Rosenthal refers to as "enchantments" which, like theater, intend on metaphorically transporting the individual to another "place" through the suspension of disbelief, where an experience may occur.   Site specific installations –

rapprochements – rely on creating and harnessing a real, tangible sense of place, unlike the more

passive observational sense of place established in enchantment types of installations.[217] Sense of place

becomes an important factor in determining the type of experience that the artist intends their user to

have.

---

[215] Markus Bruderlin, *Archisculpture*, ed. Christoph Brockhaus and Philip Ursprung (Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2005).
[216] *Liz Diller Plays with Architecture | Video on TED.com*, accessed September 9, 2012,
http://www.ted.com/talks/liz_diller_plays_with_architecture.html.
[217] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 78.

Its similarity to architecture and design positions installation art as a useful medium for the exploration of conceptual ideas in the built environment. "Installations allow architects to comment on and critique the status quo, and to imagine new forms, methods, and ideas in architecture."[218] Bernard Tschumi referred to artistic endeavors by architects as "works of the limit" which "provide isolated episodes amidst the mainstream of commercial production"[219] By exploring the limits of architectural capacity through artistic examination, architects and designers are able to push the boundaries of their day to day practice, infusing it with new ideas and perspectives, and "challeng[ing] the conventions of everyday space."[220] It is also worth considering that this artistic playground may afford the practitioner a sacred space for creative exploration, uninhibited by the confines of client based projects.

Diller-Scofidio+Renfro, the New York based architecture studio with principals, Elizabeth Diller, Charles Renfro, and Ricardo Scofidio, use installation art as an integral part of their practice. They "first achieved renown…with installations that

Figure 13. Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston – Digital Media Center.
Source: Frankphotos. 2008, Digital Photo. Available from: Flickr, http://bit.ly/UhM4gs (accessed December 1, 2012).

explored their interest in technologies of vision, mechanical devices and norms and aberrations."[221] Often, their projects combine art and architecture, as seen in Blur Building, an exposition pavilion at the Swiss Expo in 2002 (see Figure 11). Through the use of numerous choreographed nozzles producing mist

---

[218] Bonnemaison and Eisenbach, *Installations By Architects*, 14.
[219] Bernard Tschumi, "Architecture and Limits," *Artforum* 19, no. 4 (December 1980): 36.
[220] *Liz Diller Plays with Architecture | Video on TED.com*.
[221] Bonnemaison and Eisenbach, *Installations By Architects*, 19.

and fog, the artists/architects designed a building essentially made from water. Much technical

coordination was required to successfully manipulate the fog in to the desired form, but the result was

"decidedly low-definition" in that it was simplistically immersive, contrary to the more common quest

for immersive high definition environments.[222] Stimulating the senses, or in this case calling attention to

the senses by creating an environment where "visual and acoustic references are erased,"[223] carries over

into the firm's commercial projects.   In the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, the firm designed a

building that "provide[s] dynamic areas for public enjoyment."[224] One example of this is the media

reference center which is suspended under the building's expansive cantilever with an angled window

framing the harbor beneath.[225] Not unlike their work with the blur building, this horizon-less framing of

the water creates another low-definition immersive environment, stimulating the visitor's senses (see

Figure 13).

The Blur Building and the ICA Boston are just a couple of examples of how DSR incorporates the

concepts of installation art into their architectural practice.   Diller and Scofidio's work as artists was

honored with a retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 2003 and included a re-installation of 21

projects spanning a period of just over 20 years. This retrospective showcased their exploration and

experimentation in the issues of technology, surveillance, and consumerism, among others.[226] The use

of installation art has proven crucial in the unique type of experiential architecture designed by DSR. It

provides an opportunity for the examination of critical concepts and issues impacting our present

---

[222] "Diller Scofidio + Renfro," *Diller Scofidio + Renfro*, accessed November 29, 2012, http://www.dsrny.com/.
[223] Ibid.
[224] "Our Building," *The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston*, accessed November 29, 2012,
http://www.icaboston.org/about/thenewica/.
[225] "Design Highlights," *The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston*, accessed November 29, 2012,
http://www.icaboston.org/about/thenewica/design-highlights/.
[226] "ARCHITECTURE REVIEW; The Classicists of Contemporary Design - New York Times," *New York Times*, accessed
November 29, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/28/arts/architecture-review-the-classicists-of-
contemporary-design.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm.

condition, and it provides the opportunity to impose new ideas and perspectives on the firm's built projects.

In a broader manner, installation art can be used as a commentary on the modern human condition. It provides an opportunity to critique the fragmentation of society by emphasizing and reflecting the characteristics that have led to this condition. Rosenthal suggests that "[t]he technique of installation has proved to be a useful tool by which to rhetorically speak about and investigate life."[227] The work making the commentary and the space that contains the work become indistinguishable in installation art thus making the conceptual goals of the artist part of the viewing experience.[228]

Our modern condition has resulted in a dispersed subjectivity, whereby multiple perspectives influencing how we perceive our surroundings and objects change from person to person, and they can also differ throughout the day depending on context, interaction, and current experience. This dispersed subjectivity may lead to fragmentation of experience both as a society and within the individual. By engaging the viewer in a highly subjective experience, and relying on that experience to convey meaning, installation artists "construct… a set in which the viewing subject may experience this fragmentation first hand."[229] Installation art "expose[s] us to the 'reality' of our condition as decentered subjects without closure…imply[ing] that we may become adequate to this model, and thereby more equipped to negotiate our actions in the world and with other people." [230] By confronting our modern dispersed subjectivity, installation art comments on our relationships within society and the overall human condition. This commentary "is profoundly effective because [installation art] is replete with the substance of life."[231]

---

[227] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 27.
[228] Ibid., 25.
[229] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 130.
[230] Ibid., 131.
[231] Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 27.

Modern, digital technology is often embedded within installation art both as a subject and as a method of execution. Many installations rely on technology for video projections, sound, recording, and many other manipulations of the installed space (see Figure 14). Some believe that the myriad entertainment opportunities, information, and experiences afforded by modern technology has challenged installation artists to find new ways to create engaging experiences. [232] "Technology reshapes […] everyday encounters. It allows people to be constantly connected to a vast and virtual social realm – yet, paradoxically they are often simultaneously unaware of their immediate surroundings."[233] Installation art, with its ability to use space as a means of producing experience offers the opportunity for visitors to reconnect with their immediate, non-virtual surroundings and potentially other viewers who are experiencing the installation simultaneously. In her commentary on the Art/React installation at the Milwaukee Art Museum [verify] Judith Donath suggests that "our era of increased connectivity has diminished local interaction making for a pervasive alienation from the physical present."[234] Installation art both wrestles with this issue as a concept, and while at time is may confront this idea directly, the work can also produce the collateral impact of connecting individuals back to the "physical present."

Figure 14. Genesis Trial.
Danielle Roney. MOCA GA, Atlanta. Source: Atlanta Celebrates Photography.
2008, Digital Photo. Available from: Flickr, http://bit.ly/11huXAv (accessed Nov 30, 2012).

---

[232] *Act/React*, 31.
[233] Donath, "Technological Interventions in Everyday Interaction," 34.
[234] Ibid., 54.

In a similar fashion, as discussed in earlier sections, our digital technology is changing the types and prevalence of individual relationships. Is the digital world a participatory community or just an illusion?[235] The digital world offers us an illusion of reality – relationships that can be negotiated and controlled through technology in addition to a false sense of reality delivered – through mass-media entertainment. Claire Bishop sees installation art as a means of addressing this illusion of experience. "In this way, 'installation art implies that it reveals the 'true' nature of what it means to be a human in the world – as opposed to the 'false' and illusory subject position produced by our experience of painting, film, or television."[236] By having authentic, tangible experiences, installation art provides the potential for visitors to question what is real while considering the implications of an illusory digital life.

Earlier in this section, Liz Diller was quoted as having said that "architecture is nothing more than a special effects machine."[237] This definition implies that the concept of illusion plays an important role in her work. Yet, when reviewing Bishop's argument for installation art as a means of presenting visitors with reality, we find the idea of illusion to be a negative characteristic of experience. One might offer that installation art is inherently creating a sense of illusion through the use of "special effects" similar to Diller's proposal. What is true is the experience held by the end user. Regardless of the means in which the experience is contrived, interacting with an environment whether through an installation or a building presents an ephemeral encounter that is not as scripted and predictable as a painting or as elusive as an experience which occurs purely in a digital realm. In this way, both the built environment and installation art share much in common.

By briefly reviewing the concept of installation art, we find that it is a response to, critique of, and has an effect on the modern condition. This conceptually charged medium places the viewer inside the art, creating an experience that is not limited by a frame or a gallery wall. In this way, it allows the

---

[235] Uzzell, "People-Environment Relationships in a Digital World," 95.
[236] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 80.
[237] *Liz Diller Plays with Architecture | Video on TED.com*.

artist to meaningfully critique and expose issues of the modern human condition. By emphasizing and

exaggerating certain characteristics of this condition or other concepts, installation art has effectively

been used by architects and designers as a means to explore ideas that would otherwise be unfit for the

built environment. We have also seen that this relationship between installation art and the built

environment is more symbiotic than definitive, offering a new lens through which to look at

architectural space. The goal of this analysis was to provide justification for using installation art as the

methodology for which to question an expanding fragmentation between society and our sense of place

mitigated by modern digital communications technology. So far it has shown that installation art is

effective in communicating contemporary issues, that it has effectively been used by architects for

conceptual exploration, and that it is inextricably linked to the practice of interior design.

5.2 Relational Aesthetics as Context for Installation Art Methodology

When considering how installation art can be used as a means of contemplating, and perhaps

creating, new-found sources of interaction in an otherwise fragmented modern world, it difficult to

avoid Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics. Bourriaud, a curator of exhibitions focused on highly

interactive art works, published his theory in 1998 in French, later translated into English in 2002, and

found that work during the 1990s was continuing the "struggle against utilitarian rationalism." [238] He

used the term, "relational aesthetics," to refer to the interactive art of the 1990s, examples of which

were often in shows for which he was the curator. Claire Bishop, an art historian and writer, described

relational aesthetic works as those that, "seek to set up encounters between people in which meaning is

elaborated collectively rather than in the privatized space of individual consumption."[239] This is similar to

the definition proposed by Bourriaud for relational aesthetics as "an art taking as its theoretical horizon

the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and

---

[238] Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics."
[239] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 116.

private symbolic space."[240] In summary, there is no arguing that the focus of artworks flagged as belonging to relational aesthestics was focused primarily on interactivity.

Bourriaud sought to distance these works from that of previous contemporary, postmodern art stating instead that the work of relational aesthetics is not in a "position outside the dominant culture"[241] as he found the Situationists, Dadaists, and others. He claimed that "[w]e find ourselves, with relational artists, in the presence of a group of people who, for the first time since the appearance of conceptual art in the mid sixties, in no way draw sustenance from any re-interpretation of this or that past aesthetic movement."[242] Despite this proclamation, relational aesthetics bore a number of similarities to other postmodern artistic movements through its interdisciplinary emphasis.[243] Claire Bishop identified relational aesthetics' connection, through a similar "rhetoric of democracy and emancipation,"[244] to Happenings, FLUXUS, and other 1970s performance art movements. And again, in a review in the New York Times, the work of relational aesthetics was described as a result of the "different paths opened up by conceptual art and its early 1970s offshoots."[245] So while art critics may have found relational aesthetics to be profoundly connected to other, similar movements in art, Bourriaud maintained that the main goal was, "learning to inhabit the world in a better way, instead of trying to construct it based on preconceived idea of historical evolution."[246]

This style of art, and its agenda of promoting relationships among viewers, was proposed as a means of reclaiming social space. Bourriaud believes that "the essence of humankind is purely trans-

---

[240] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les Presses du reel, 2002), 14.

[241] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," 170.

[242] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 44.

[243] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," 168.

[244] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 61.

[245] Roberta Smith, "'Philippe Parreno' and 'At Home/Not at Home,' at Bard," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2010, sec. Arts / Art & Design, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/arts/design/02parreno.html.

[246] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 13.

individual made up of bonds that link individuals together in social forms."[247] These social interactions,

according to Bourriaud have been hijacked by technological machine automation like ATM's, automatic

check outs, gas pumps, etc. which reduce the size and amount of social space in society.[248] Furthermore,

as these automated exchanges compartmentalize social relations, it becomes the artists' purpose to

become "a quasi-social worker – an individual who glues together the intellectual branches and

communicational fallouts that underwrite contemporary interrelations."[249] Today, not only have we

seen computer automation of certain functions, but as described earlier, our face to face interactions

are undermined by personal ICTs. Thus, the justification for relational art fostering meaningful

interaction continues.

Bourriaud found that modern technology offered artists the ability to question human behavior.

He saw its use as something which could possibly "produce models of relations with the world"[250]

accepting that, "our age is nothing if not the age of the screen."[251] Ultimately, what comes across in his

description of the modern condition within the context of relational aesthetics is that we have become

disillusioned by the promise of liberation by technology.[252] This disillusionment breeds a desire for

interaction, and the work of relation aesthetics helps fulfill that desire.

The relations between people, in this case spectators or visitors to an exhibit of relational

aesthetic work, are the most important aspect of this style of art. Less focus was placed on the aesthetic

outcome of the project while the emphasis was on the relations created by the work. Due to its

ephemeral nature, the work itself is less a creation of the artist and more a result of the collaboration

among participants. Bourriauad sees "contemporary artwork's form […] spreading out from its material

---

[247] Ibid., 18.
[248] Ibid., 17.
[249] Anthony Downey, "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics," *Third Text* 21, no. 3 (May 2007): 270, doi:10.1080/09528820701360534.
[250] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 78.
[251] Ibid., 66.
[252] Ibid., 65.

form"[253] to the point where the artwork is more than only the object itself, but instead an ephemeral representation of experience. The 'art' of relational aesthetics exists "in the moment" and its form is a result of the collaboration among viewers, the work, and at times the artist herself. Contemporary art has a definite time – performance art only occurs at a specific time/place – unlike art that hangs in a museum that is available continuously to the general public.[254] This ephemeral aspect of the art "tends to blur creation and exhibition."[255]

Another hallmark of the work of relational aesthetics is their interdisciplinary qualities. Relational aesthetics considers ideas, mediums, and fields outside of "traditional" fine art. A particularly interesting example of this, Mark Dion's *Tate Thames Dig*, is an exhibition that combines archaeological excavation practices with art installation described by Toni Ross in *Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity*.[256] In this work, Dion conducted an archaeological dig with a number of volunteers along the banks of the Thames in London as well as the site which would eventually become the Tate Modern. The team of pseudo archaeologists cleaned, classified, and categorized their findings: anything from bones to plastic toys. The artifacts were then displayed as part of an exhibit at the Tate Gallery between October of 1999 and January of 2000. The hallmark of this installation of artifacts was the equality in which they were displayed.[257] Regardless of perceived value, one item was not displayed hierarchically as more significant than another. The interdisciplinary manner in which Dion conducted this work makes it stand out as exemplary of relational aesthetics. This notion is emphasized by Ross, "the explicit interdisciplinary orientation of Dion's art echoes Bourriaud's claim that relational aesthetics

---

[253] Ibid., 21.
[254] Ibid., 29.
[255] Ibid., 38.
[256] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'."
[257] Giorgia Bottinelli and Tina Fiske, "Tate Thames Dig 1999," *Tate*, February 2002, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dion-tate-thames-dig-t07669/text-summary.

stresses a 'transitive' relation between aesthetic production and other systems or disciplines."[258] While this interdisciplinary aspect of the work fosters the development of interaction it is precisely this interaction and interdisciplinary process that makes determining the actual creator of the work difficult.[259]

As alluded to in Dion's Tate Thames Dig, democracy is an emphasis of relational aesthetics projects. In the Dig, the process of collecting the objects as well as the egalitarian way in which they were displayed without an intrinsic sense of hierarchy

Figure 15. Rikrit Tiravanija, Untitled, 1995 (Still).
1995, Mixed Media, 303 Gallery, New York. Available from: ARTstor, www.artstor.org
(accessed Dec 01. 2012).

highlighted this notion of democracy. Additionally, the efforts of the excavators as well as the specimens themselves were all treated equally.[260] Democratization in relational aesthetics is also seen in how these projects work within existing systems regardless of their banality in order to expose new ways of relating. Furthermore, the idea that the commoditized "object" is less important than the experience of interaction also speaks to the importance of democracy in the works. Anthony Downey in

---

[258] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," 174.

[259] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 55.

[260] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," 176–177.

Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics, stated, "the interactive (political) use-value of an artwork tends to be advocated over its value as a contemplative (aesthetic) object."[261]

The democratization of experience evident in the work of relational aesthetics is in keeping with the larger overtones of postmodern work. In *Artintelligence*, Graham Coulter-Smith shows "that art of the 1990's is a micro political form of resistance to the reification and alienation evident in capitalist corporate culture."[262] Hence, the idea of a democratic experience would help to alleviate symptoms of alienation and disjunction in society. One goal of relational aesthetics to create a liberal democracy, bringing together disparate elements into a whole, as reflected in the ideal that neither the artist, the work, or the viewers are part of a rigid hierarchy, but are instead all on equal footing.[263] Or, as reinforced by Ross, "art and plurality of disciplinary parts, come together on an equal footing to form a whole."[264]

Figure 16. Thomas Hirschhorn, Concrete Shock.
2005, Mixed Media, Gladstone Gallery. Available from: ARTstor, www.artstor.org (accessed Dec 01, 2012).

Bourriaud focused much of his book's attention on the work of Rikrit Tiravanija (see Figure 15) and Felix Gonzalez-Torres, both world renowned contemporary artists. While the author cited other artists whose work is representative of relational aesthetics, "there are really only two artists whose

---

[261] Downey, "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics," 272.
[262] Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics," 845.
[263] Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics."
[264] Ross, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'," 171.

work consistently supports Bourriaud's thesis: Rikrit Tiravanija and Gonzalez-Torres and of those two

only Tiravanija can be described as thoroughly 'relational.'"[265] Their work, especially that of Tiravanija,

whose early installations included cooking and serving Pad Thai in a gallery, exemplifies Bourriaud's

relational aesthetic ideals by creating a collaborative and interactive environment for both artist and

viewer. "Tiravanija […] seeks to set up literal relationships between the visitors to his work, and this

active participation is priviledged over the detached contemplation more conventionally associated with

the gallery experience."[266] While this work may epitomize Bourriaud's intent behind classifying it as

relational aesthetics, it also clarifies the potential failures of his theories. Claire Bishop, in her article

Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics, noted that "Tiravanija's microtopia gives up on the idea of

transformation in public culture and reduces its scope to the pleasures of a private group [of gallery

visitors]"[267] She cited the more politically dynamic work of Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschhorn (see

Figure 16) as perhaps being more profound and meaningful examples of relational aesthetics. "Sierra's

'actions' have been organized around relations that are more complicated – and more controversial –

than those produced by the artists associated with relational aesthetics."[268] Sierra explores the idea of

exclusion and limitations based on social and legal criteria.[269] "Their work [Sierra and Hirschorn]

acknowledges the limitations of what is possible as art and subjects to scrutiny all easy claims for a

transitive relationship between art and society"[270] and does so without an "emphasis on dialogue for its

own sake (as a representation of communication)."[271]

Bourriaud's assertions and assumptions regarding this art movement are met with other

criticism, notably that the ability to objectively critique the work is complicated by the lack of "criteria

---

[265] Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics," 845.
[266] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 118.
[267] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 69.
[268] Ibid., 70.
[269] Ibid., 74.
[270] Ibid., 79.
[271] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 120.

against which we may evaluate its success."[272] Bourriaud focused the emphasis of successful relational aesthetic work on the quality of the relationships it fostered. This creates a problem in quantifiable measurement and analysis, and ultimately begs to question what is the value of these relationships, and why?[273] Since the work of relational aesthetics typically appear within a gallery setting, they attract an audience pre-disposed to appreciating art, or at least willing to pay to visit a gallery. The relationships created by art serving this audience seems highly limiting if, as previously mentioned, Bourriaud's intention is to learn to "inhabit the world in a better way." Instead, we are perhaps only learning how art enthusiasts interact with each other when faced with an interactive work of so-called relational aesthetics. This may not produce an outcome that is meaningful to the greater good.

Other critique of relational aesthetics suggests that Bourriaud only selected works that were effective in supporting his concept. [274] And, his theory is accused of lacking, "a causative, convincing analysis of the politics of the socially inter-subjective relations that it so impassionedly evokes, beyond the suggestion that they address communicative and interrelational[sic] breaches in the fabric of modern living."[275] Ultimately, in making bold claims about a nascent and self-proclaimed artistic movement, Bourriaud placed himself in a position primed for critique. The validation of his views were made more complicated by the fact that he was a curator who stood to gain from the establishment of a so-called school of art such as relational aesthetics.

Not unlike many of the prior theories and concepts surrounding postmodern work, Bourriaud's relational aesthetics sought to address the modern condition of alienation. He saw technology and shrinking social space as hallmarks of an age in which the need for interaction was heightened. Through artwork, projects, and installations that focused not on the final output of an artifact, but instead on

[272] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 63.
[273] Ibid., 67.
[274] Coulter-Smith, "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics."
[275] Downey, "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics," 274.

experience, he believed that relational aesthetics art could foster interactions between viewer and artist

as well as among viewers to create work that was a result of this collaboration and not frozen in time

within a frame or on a pedestal. These criteria for relational aesthetics are familiar to much of the larger

field of installation art, and Bourriaud's perceived insistence that his theory was somehow set apart

from the larger postmodern movement was in contrast to a number of formidable critics. In the end

though, his writing extends the conversation of disjunction and alienation in the modern world, and like

his predecessors and contemporaries, is looking for meaningful ways to reconnect society through

meaningful experience and interaction.

6. SHOWHOUSE 1: YOU ARE [T]HERE

Figure 17. Installation Postcard Design.
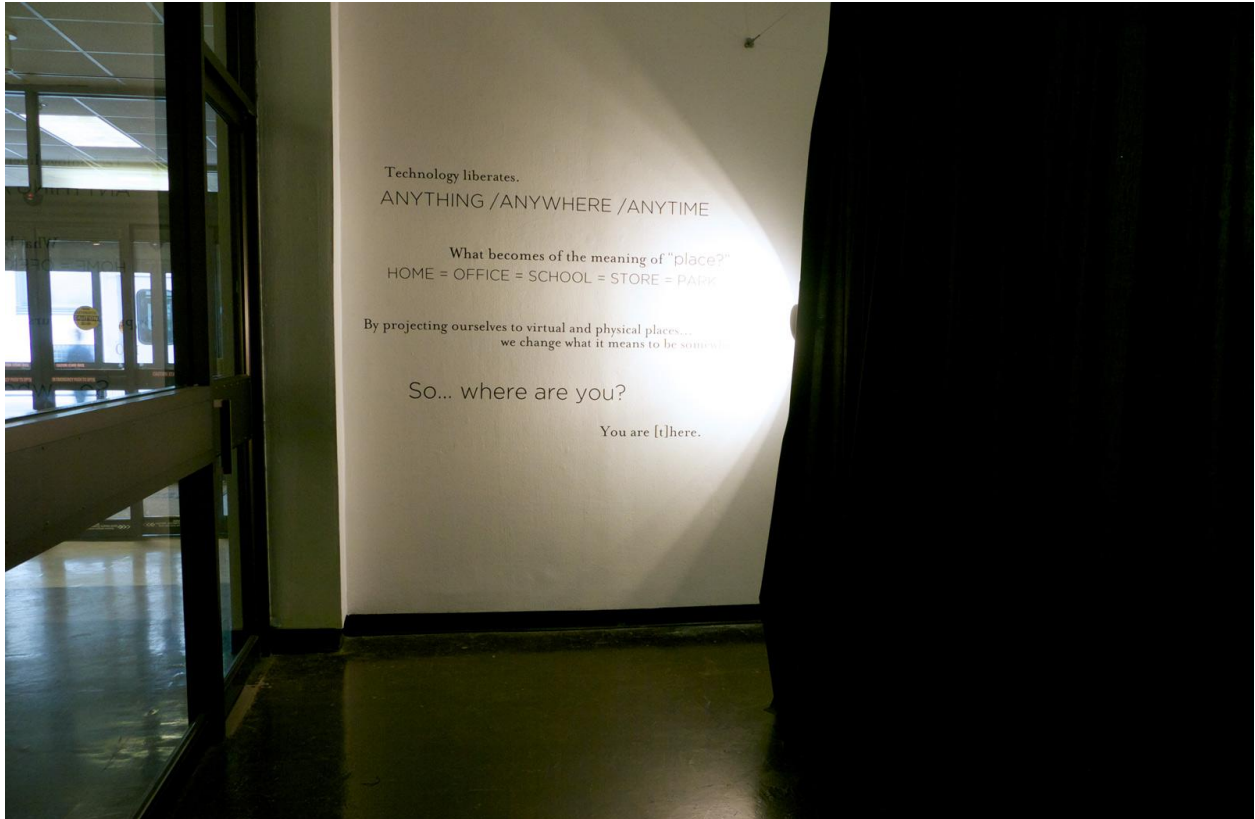Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 18. Text at Installation Entry.
Photo by Cotter Christian, 2013.

The preceding analysis has revealed some of the ways in which the technology of our

contemporary world alters our relationship to where we are in space and concurrently, our perceptions

of place. The precedent exists for designers and architects to employ installation art as a means of

exploring complex issues in an environment without typical client limitations. Simultaneously,

installation art can be a means to create a shared, interactive experience between visitors, the art, and

potentially the artist, positioning this medium uniquely to be used for exploration of the topic of place

and technology. The execution of a site-specific, interactive installation is directly related to the field of

interior design as it requires an understanding of the physical space, the ability to use conventions of

form and applied elements, and the intention of providing an environment for an end user. To that end,

the goal of *Show House 1: you are [t]here*, is to employ interior design methodologies to create an

interactive art installation that symbolizes the technologically induced fragmentation between our physical and virtual connection to place.

The term, "Show house," was added to the title in order to establish a strong connection between this installation and the praxis of interior design. As described, ubiquitous technology has the potential to not only alter our relationships with each other, but how we perceive, use and experience our interior environment. The field of interior design has a history of using show houses as a way for designers to solicit business as well as sell their wares. It is my belief that these events commoditize and undermine the contextual importance of design, relying instead on trend and fashion over substance,

Figure 19. Welch School Galleries "Small Gallery."
Photo by Cotter Christian, 2013.

Figure 20. Installation Photograph, Living Room.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

analysis, and concept. By hijacking this term, I hope for the viewer to consider and question this issue of

fragmentation within the context of interior design. As a professional interior designer, I am using this

gallery as my show house, a place to communicate my perspective on interior space through art. The

numerical suffix, "1," opens the opportunity to expand the installation into a series which I imagine

could address other relevant, conceptual ideas.

Initially housed in Georgia State University's Welch School Galleries at the Ernest G. Welch

School of Art and Design in Atlanta (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), the installation features

wo distinct spaces, delineated by a wood frame wall. In order to establish a suspension of disbelief for

the visitor, black curtains are employed to mask the view from the gallery lobby. This curtain creates a
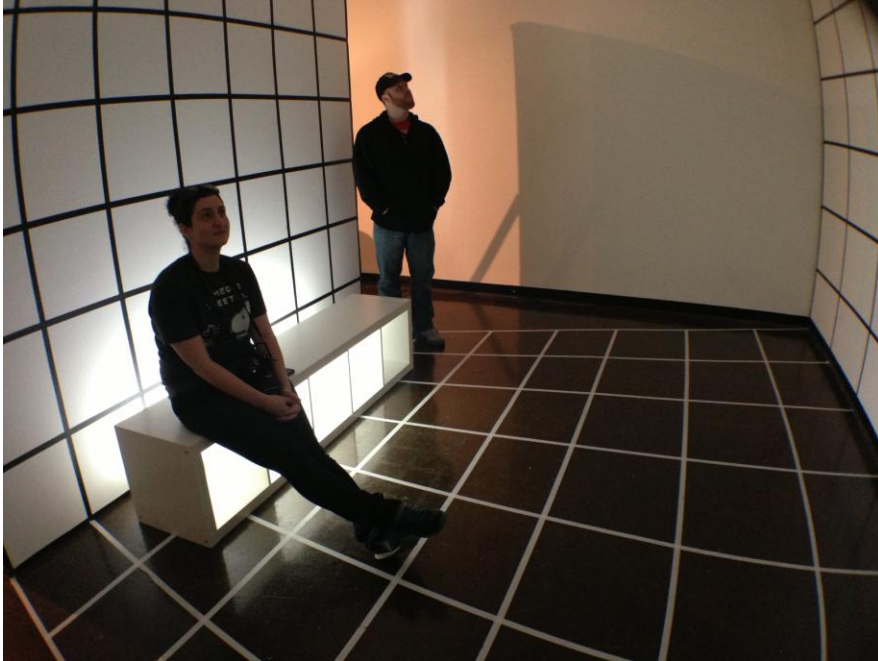
third transitional space that focuses the attention of the visitor on wall graphics describing fragments of key concepts evident from the research, with the goal of "setting the scene" for the more interactive portion of the installation. The initial space after the transitional area encountered by

Figure 21. Visitors Looking at Projection in Gridded Area.
Photo by Cotter Christian, 2013

visitors employs conventional artifacts of a residential space: a sofa, lamp, plant, throw, rug, etc. The residential environment is reinforced by an exposed wood stud wall with its "drywall" removed. Projected onto this wall is a time lapse video showing a residential interior from midday to night as evidenced by the subtly setting sun. Showing a video of an interior as opposed to installing additional furniture and appointments to create a more robust recreation of a residential interior serves to establish an ephemeral and fragmented feeling: the space only reads "residential interior" because of the limited physical cues and this virtual projection. Another intention of the projection is to suggest the "anyplaceness" of the living room with the goal being to create the "everyman" of living rooms by using stereotypical visual cues.

When seated on the couch, visitors view a faux wood enclosed, standard definition, television. On the television, running with a real-time delay is video of the visitor seated on the couch. In the simplest interpretation, the visitor is watching themselves watching themselves. As they become seated on the couch, the 10 second delay disconnects their current physical experience with what is being

viewed on the screen. When the visitor rises from the couch and leaves the "room" his or her image

remains for a short period of time – long enough for the visitor to feel disconnected from the image on

the screen.

Behind the exposed stud wall is another "room" designed to be void of the stereotypical

conventions used on the other side to create a living room environment. On this side, the space pays

homage to the work of Superstudio and their Continuous Monument project which showed how the

world would look if it was covered by the homogenizing modernist grid. Here the grid is used to create

the antithesis of the conventional interior on the other side, reinforced by installing a white, cube bench in the mirrored position to the sofa. The back wall of this side receives a

Figure 22. Installation Photograph, Gridded Area Projection.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013

projection of a visitor on the couch in real time. It is this projection that is being recorded and displayed

on the television on a delay. The amount of the delay allows the visitor to also be captured by video in

the grid room and then return to the conventional living room. They are physically present in the living

room, while the delayed projection on the television shows them in the grid room. This disconnection is

used to symbolize the idea of fragmentation as the visitor can be in two, albeit virtual, places

simultaneously, not unlike how our contemporary technology allows us to be in multiple places simultaneously.

Show House 1: You are [t]here creates an experience for the visitor that is modeled after the fragmentation of place and activity that occurs in our contemporary built environment. By using recognizable conventions to establish the nature of the interior environment accompanied by a series of projections and video capture, visitors are subtly encouraged to question the relationship of their physical presence to that of the virtual.

Figure 23. Installation Photograph, Video Delay on Television.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013

7. VISITOR FEEDBACK AND INSTALLATION CONCLUSIONS

The installation, show house 1: you are [t]here, was on display at Georgia State University's

Welch School Galleries for public viewing from March 4 – March 8, 2013 with a reception on the evening

of March 7th. While it was difficult to make observations regarding visitor reactions to the installation

during all times, the captive audience at the reception provided an excellent opportunity to observe and

solicit reaction. The show was promoted via email and printed invitations as well as social media, and it

was through these outlets that commentary about the installation was made available by visitors.

Described in the previous section were the overall goals for the installation. It was my hope to

design an installation that created an interactive environment for visitors around the topic presented in

this research. In short, the installation was to be a physical manifestation of the fragmentation of place

and activity in our current built environment saturated with digital technology. Important for the

installation were some of the key concepts extracted from the analysis of relational aesthetics such as

interactivity between the art and the users as well as a democratically egalitarian experience. These

goals were noted by two of the visitors who commented on the unique dichotomy established by

showing a residential interior within an installation, "it appears to be a private space, yet is in a public

environment." Additionally the gallery itself contributed to this feeling in that it was as one visitor

commented, a "temporary exhibition space owned by no one and everyone..."

By observing visitors and inquiring about their experience, I was able to solidify my own

thoughts on the installation as well as encounter some unexpected interpretations. One of the more

obvious observations was that visitors needed to spend some time with the installation in order to have

a meaningful reaction. This was quite apparent in observing people who walked into the gallery and

chose not to sit on the couch. These visitors did not seem engaged in the installation, and it is safe to

assume that they did not encounter the full, intended, fragmented experience. The need for time in the

installation in order to assess was true from visitor comments as well, "I didn't initially understand the

connection between the two spaces." Also, "I liked the subtlety of the nuances.... It took me a while

before I realized that the picture behind the sofa on which I was sitting was not the same image reflected in the video."

Another readily apparent observation was that multiple users facilitated a more meaningful experience and outcome. One visitor said, "[I] discovered the exhibit necessitate[d] more than one person to catalyze the interactivity, but once activated it becomes a great unifier of strangers as they participate[d] in a shared experience." This shared experience was an overall goal for the installation, which perhaps undermined the experience a solo visitor to the gallery might have. In fact, in watching people interact with projections of others as well as physically present individuals, it became obvious that the live video delay offered an entertaining and amusing game. Some would jump from room to room hoping to be virtually projected into the same place simultaneously, or interact with the live projections of people on the couch from the grid room, superimposing themselves into the delayed video.

The presence of multiple users made for some unexpected observations as well. For instance, one individual noted that while sitting on the sofa watching himself on the television in delay, "a woman sat next to me; she was with me, but not on the screen. A very eerie feeling, like a ghost visiting me." I found this experience quite unique because it implies that the view witnessed on the television was somehow more real for the individual than the actual experience of being on the sofa next to another person. This was not the only reference made to ghosts. Another individual said that while watching others watching themselves in delay that it "reminded [her] of ghosts in the movies that watch the lives of their former selves." While the intention of the installation was not to conjure up illusions to the afterlife, these observations do begin to shed light on our perception of place and its relationship to time.

Ultimately, a general fascination with the television screen showing the delayed video was observed. Individuals sitting on the couch were often surprised to see themselves appear on the screen, especially with the delay. As described, "I really enjoyed discovering the time delay and watching others make the same revelation." Visitors on the sofa would wave their arms and make other abrupt movements to test the accuracy and length of the delay. This fascination also unearthed some questions of self-consciousness and voyeurism from individuals. When working with cameras, screens, and projections, it is difficult to avoid metaphors related to surveillance, voyeurism, and privacy, and it appears that these concepts were identified by some of the visitors. One female mentioned how there was a sense of discomfort watching the video delay while seated on the couch knowing that a camera was filming and projecting your image elsewhere. This same individual felt much more comfortable in the grid room where she effectively became the voyeur, watching the projection of others sit on the sofa. This sentiment was echoed by another individual who stated, "I have always thought it would be nice to be in two places at once, but then in reality it wasn't all that intriguing. Maybe it is because I am way more interested in watching other people and watching myself can make me uncomfortable." While not necessarily comfortable for all, viewing oneself on the television in delay elicited additional thoughts and ideas, "the natural self-consciousness of seeing yourself makes a person consider the relation of self to space and time," described one viewer.

The contrast between the living room space and the gridded area was noted by multiple respondents. It was my intention to treat these two spaces drastically different as a statement of the meaninglessness of place when mediated by digital technology. While interpretations of this symbolism varied, it was consistently observed that visitors saw the two spaces as distinctly different yet inextricably related. When describing his experience one visitor said, "Going from the familiar 'any living room USA couch' to the foreign, sterile, gridded white screen environment [was] such a stark contrast, dialectic opposition to the extreme." Another viewed the gridded area a symbol for potential rather

than a commentary on the present, "when walking into the grid room, the starkness of which was striking, and which to me stood for the possibility of creating a new space." Potential for new types of interior environments was a reaction also held by another viewer who commented, "Can a new point of reference be used to impart more meaning into the creation of new interior (and exterior) environments?" The efficacy of the contrast employed between the two spaces was not consistent in its impression on visitors as evidenced by one comment which stated, "because if its starkness, the second space felt like a backroom storage area where non-employees weren't really supposed to be." Perhaps a way to mitigate this interpretation, more "furniture" could have been added to the gridded are, further resembling the living room area layout, thus making the connection between the two spaces even stronger.

As previously intimated when discussing the self-consciousness of viewing oneself on the television screen in delay, the connection between time, space, and place was particularly strong. Time was crucial to this installation, since achieving the disconnectedness and sense of fragmentation was generated using time-delayed video. The intention of this delay was to encourage viewers to question what they were seeing and its meaning. The timeline of user experience within the installation became more cyclical as opposed to the more expected and common linear progression. This lead one visitor to question, "if the observation and perhaps experience of multiple spaces/places can become non-linear and concurrent, how is the linear human condition potentially altered?" It is this type of questioning that this installation hoped to encourage, but not necessarily answer. These ideas, do, however, provide opportunities for future research and exploration. Contrasting the notion of how we typically experience space in a linear fashion, one viewer noted that the installation "totally shifts our linear experience into a more circular one, a shifting of perspective that begins [to] question the validity of our commonly one-dimensional, linear time-oriented experience of a three-dimensional setting, place."

The primary question asked by the installation is, "where are you?" One of the main goals was to create an environment whereby user/viewers would question the meaning of place. This was not discretely proposed to visitors, instead it was an underlying theme, and the hope was that the visitor would pick up on this intention. "There was no way to be in [the] space and not consider your relation to it," described a visitor when asked about the symbolism of the installation. Other viewer reactions to the installation regarding space and place were numerous, and this suggests some level of success in encouraging the questioning of "place." Reactions were varied, but all traversed the common theme of place and technology. "If I can experience joyful interaction in one space, even a virtual space, and enjoy and share with others in that space, isn't it possible that this virtual space can give me a sense of warmth and security, a sense of what we may call, 'home.'" Another response suggested that the installation "cause[d] us to take a second look at our environments – to feel, to perceive, to imagine, and then to question and challenge what we think we saw." The installation made some viewers reflect on the very real disconnection they feel from their surroundings due to their constant connection to digital technology, "experiencing the installation brought this seemingly intangible phenomenon of never truly being present to a hard and undeniable physical reality and holistic, immersive experience." And another visitor remarked on the conceptual foundation for the installation when he commented, "For me the installation posed the seemingly simple question, 'where am I?' in a new way, and suggested that the question isn't as easy to satisfy as it may seem."

Ultimately, contemporary technology that allows us to be constantly connected (and distracted) from our physical surroundings, creating this overarching sense of disconnectedness was the pervasive theme of the installation. Visitors questioned this relationship, and overall agreed on the pervasiveness of this technology and that it presents challenges for connectivity between individuals, if not the physical environment. One person described this relationship as the "pseudo or implied connectedness created by technology," but did not specify whether that was in relation to the physical environment or

interpersonal relationships. In a more direct response to the question of technology and place, one

visitor asked, "if technology provides the means to visually (and potentially more) recreate spaces, does

it have the capacity to also recreate the emotional experience of that place?" Again, we see

commentary that opens up potential new directions for research and inquiry. In commentary and

reaction regarding technology, a consistent negative sentiment regarding its ability to disconnect us

from our physical space was evident. Described by one viewer, "technology is undoubtedly only

increasing into every area of our spaces and being, so how do we utilize this understanding to remind us

to experience the physical place and the present moment." Overall, it is assumed that the installation's

intent of exposing the disconnectedness between place and activity by technology was considered by a

number of viewers.

While this summary of feedback is by no means a comprehensive, scientific method for

comprehensively evaluating reaction to this installation, it does provide some insight to the questions

and sentiments encountered by its visitors. The goal for this installation was to create an environment

where visitors were presented with technology's ability to disconnect us from our physical surroundings,

and from the reaction and commentary analyzed it would appear that it achieved this outcome with

some visitors. Personally, the process of designing, building, experiencing, and evaluating this

installation was very rewarding. As a trained interior designer, it is easy to fall victim to an industry

obsessed with labels – what defines interior design? By exploring installations, and to a degree, the

gallery environment, the line (if one exists) between interior design and art are blurred. Creating an

interactive, immersive gallery installation is not that dissimilar to the design of a more convention –

"useful" – interior design project. This is especially true in this case since the impetus for the installation

was based on a concept, not unlike the concepts that drive interior design and architectural projects.

This installation provided an ephemeral environment which varied with the quantity and type of people

taking part in the experience. This is not a foreign idea when we think of how interior spaces in our built

environment are transformed by their occupants. The tendency during the design process for this installation was to add more symbolic elements to reinforce the concepts being presented. What was learned, however, is that sometimes confidence in message must prevail, and a message can be communicated more clearly with fewer distractions.

It is impossible not to reflect on a project of this nature and not consider what would be done differently "next time." One opportunity for future exploration would be to incorporate multiple locales into the installation. The projected interior behind the sofa was perhaps a missed opportunity to show an actual interior environment foreign to the gallery space in real time. By extending the "physical" scope of the installation, the metaphor of being in/experiencing multiple locations simultaneously could be extended. The installation offers many opportunities for future exploration, and the questions raised by those who encountered it are real. Answers ma y not be clear, but with additional research and exploration, these nascent, conceptual ideas could manifest themselves into meaningful new interpretations of interior space.

8. CONCLUSION

The topic of modern technology's impact on our sense of place is becoming cliché in the interior design and architecture zeitgeist, yet it would appear that the design of our spaces are doing little to reflect this very real and significant change in how we need, use, and interact with our surroundings. In this paper, the irony of how our technology exists in our lives is revealed. We are simultaneously connected and disconnected from our surroundings and each other, liberated and trapped by the devices we carry and rely upon. The rate of enhancement and the eventual ubiquity of digital technology is inevitable. How we address these changes as designers of the built environment is crucial if we wish to remain relevant and true to intentions of creating spaces that are safe and benevolent to their end users.

This paper looked at the work of architects, psychologists, and philosophers as a way of establishing "sense of place" despite its subjective nature. Also explored were past designers like Superstudio who were facing similar challenges with advancing technology and ideology in their own time. These explorations revealed a reliance on highly conceptual explorations of these important topics which blurred the lines between art and design. It is in this tenuous place where new ideas and solutions may lie. As a means of evaluation and further investigation, this paper led to the design and execution of a gallery installation on the topic, the purpose of which was to engage users in an interactive dialogue on the topic. While not scientific in the results, the outcome of this installation reveals that many people are aware of, and consider their relationship to their physical surroundings and other individuals as mitigated by today's pervasive technology. What emerges is a distrust and dissatisfaction for the notion of being able to be multiple places – and nowhere – simultaneously. As a means of some conclusion, from this research it appears that designers of the built environment must not ignore the cultural shift in attachment to place and each other, and use this as an opportunity to leverage a profound understanding of space to reconnect users to their surroundings, and ultimately answer the question, Where am I?
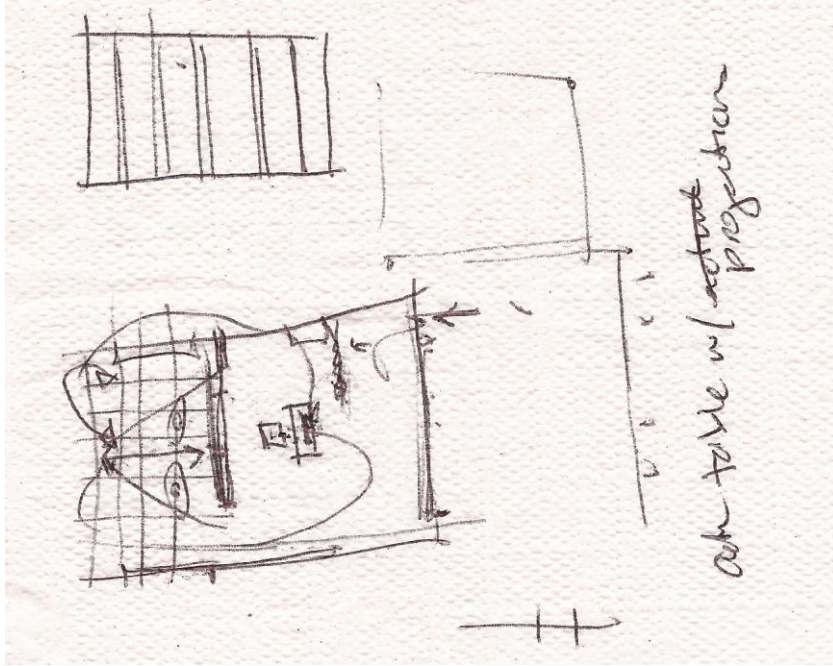
REFERENCES

Act/React: Interactive Installation Art. 1, includes DVD. Milwaukee Art Museum, 2008.

Alexander, B., C. Hubers, T. Schwanen, M. Dijst, and D. Ettema. "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime? Developing Indicators to Assess the Spatial and Temporal Fragmentation of Activities." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 38, no. 4 (2011): 678–705.

"America's Story from America's Library." *The Library of Congress*. Accessed October 12, 2012. http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/recon/jb_recon_telephone_1.html.

"Anti-matter." *The Guardian*, September 23, 2003. http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2003/mar/31/architecture.artsfeatures.

"ARCHITECTURE REVIEW; The Classicists of Contemporary Design - New York Times." *New York Times*. Accessed November 29, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/28/arts/architecture-review-the-classicists-of-contemporary-design.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm.

Bishop, C. "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." *October* (2004): 51–79.

Bishop, Claire. *Installation Art*. Tate Publishing, 2011.

Bonnemaison, Sarah, and Ronit Eisenbach. *Installations By Architects: Experiments in Building and Design*. 1st ed. Princeton Architectural Press, 2009.

Bottinelli, Giorgia, and Tina Fiske. "Tate Thames Dig 1999." *Tate*, February 2002. http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dion-tate-thames-dig-t07669/text-summary.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. Dijon: Les Presses du reel, 2002.

Bruderlin, Markus. *Archisculpture*. Edited by Christoph Brockhaus and Philip Ursprung. Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2005.

Casey, Edward S. "The Fate of Place [electronic Resource] : a Philosophical History / Edward S. Casey" (1997).

Castello, Lineu. *Rethinking the Meaning of Place*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010.

"comScore Reports January 2012 U.S. Mobile Subscriber Market Share." *comScore*, March 6, 2012. http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2012/3/comScore_Reports_January_2012_U.S._Mobile_Subscriber_Market_Share.

Coulter-Smith, Graham. "On Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics." *Artintelligence*, March 23, 2009. artintelligence.net/review/?p=845.

Debord, Guy. "Towards a Situationist International." In *Participation*, edited by Claire Bishop. Documents on Contemporary Art. London: Whitechapel, 2006.

"Design Highlights." *The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston*. Accessed November 29, 2012. http://www.icaboston.org/about/thenewica/design-highlights/.

"Diller Scofidio + Renfro." *Diller Scofidio + Renfro*. Accessed November 29, 2012. http://www.dsrny.com/.

Donath, Judith S. "Technological Interventions in Everyday Interaction." In *Art/React: Interactive Installation Art*, 84. 1st ed. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 2008.

Downey, Anthony. "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics." *Third Text* 21, no. 3 (May 2007): 267–275. doi:10.1080/09528820701360534.

Duarte, Fábio, and Rodrigo José Firmino. "Infiltrated City, Augmented Space: Information and Communication Technologies, and Representations of Contemporary Spatialities." *The Journal of Architecture* 14, no. 5 (October 2009): 545–565. doi:10.1080/13602360903187493.

Elfline, Ross. "Discotheques, Magazines and Plexiglas: Superstudio and the Architecture of Mass Culture." *Footprint* no. 8 (Spring 2011): 59–75.

Frassinelli, Piero. "Journey to the End of Architecture." In *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*, 79–83. Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003.

Gilmore, James H., and B. Joseph Pine. *Authenticity : What Consumers Really Want / James H. Gilmore, B. Joseph Pine II*. Boston, Mass. : Harvard Business School Press, c2007., 2007.

Goldberg, RoseLee. "Space as Praxis." In *Theories of Contemporary Art /*, by Richard Hertz. 2nd ed. Prentice Hall,, 1993.

Greenfield, Adam. "Beyond the Smart City." *Urbanscale*, February 17, 2011. urbanscale.org/news/2011/02/17/beyond-the-smart-city.

Groening, S. "From 'a Box in the Theater of the World' to 'the World as Your Living Room': Cellular Phones, Television and Mobile Privatization." *New Media & Society* 12, no. 8 (June 14, 2010): 1331–1347. doi:10.1177/1461444810362094.

Grossman, Lev. "A Book Lover's Guide to Reading and Walking at the Same Time." *Time Entertainment*, June 6, 2012. http://entertainment.time.com/2012/06/06/a-book-lovers-guide-to-reading-and-walking-at-the-same-time/.

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought. Translations and Introd. by Albert Hofstadter*. His Works. [1st ed.], 1971.

II, B. Joseph Pine, and James H. Gilmore. *The Experience Economy, Updated Edition*. Updated. Harvard Business Review Press, 2011.

KAJI-O'GRADY, S. "The London Conceptualists." *Journal of Architectural Education* 61, no. 4 (2008): 43–51.

Khan, Omar, and Dorita Hannah. "Performance/Architecture An Interview with Bernard Tschumi." *Journal of Architectural Education* (n.d.).

Lang, Peter. "Suicidal Desires." In *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*, 31–63. Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003.

Lang, Peter, and William Menking. "Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives." In *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*. Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003.

———. *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*. Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003.

"Layar." Accessed October 19, 2012. http://www.layar.com/.

Linker, Kate. "Bernard Tschumi: Architecture, Eroticism, and Art." *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 3 (November 1978): 107–109.

Liz Diller Plays with Architecture | Video on TED.com. Accessed September 9, 2012. http://www.ted.com/talks/liz_diller_plays_with_architecture.html.

Malpas, J.E. *Place and Experience*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Mitchell, William J. "The Revenge of Place." In *This Is Not Architecture*, edited by Kester Rattenbury. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Moore, Steven A. "Technology, Place, and the Nonmodern Thesis." *Journal of Architectural Education* 54, no. 3 (February 2001): 130–139.

Natalini, Adolfo. "A House of Calm Serentiy." In *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*, 73–77. Milano, Italy: Skira, 2003.

———. "Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux... a Statement." Lecture, AA School of Architecture, london, March 3, 1971.

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Architecture: Meaning and Place, Selected Essays*. Rizzoli, 1988.

"Our Building." *The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston*. Accessed November 29, 2012. http://www.icaboston.org/about/thenewica/.

"Quaderna 2600." *Zanotta Design*. Accessed November 24, 2012. http://www.zanotta.it/#/en/products/tables/2600_quaderna_2600.htm.

Quesada, Fernando. "Superstudio 1966-73. From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid." *Footprint* no. 8 (Spring 2011): 23–34.

Rosenthal, Mark. *Understanding Installation Art*. Munich: Prestel, 2003.

Ross, Toni. "Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: a Response to Nicolad Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics'." *Journal of Visual* 5, no. 3 (2006): 167–181.

Sharr, Adam. "Heidegger for Architects / Adam Sharr" (2007).

"Sherry Turkle." *Massachusettes Institute of Technology*. Accessed October 15, 2012.
　　　http://www.mit.edu/~sturkle/.

Sherry Turkle: Connected, but Alone? | Video on TED.com, 2012.
　　　http://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together.html.

Sime, Jonathan D. "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?" *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 6, no. 1
　　　(March 1986): 49–63. doi:10.1016/S0272-4944(86)80034-2.

Smith, Roberta. "'Philippe Parreno' and 'At Home/Not at Home,' at Bard." *The New York Times*, July 1,
　　　2010, sec. Arts / Art & Design.
　　　http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/arts/design/02parreno.html.

Stauffer, Marie Theres. "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias." Translated by Fiona Elliott. *AA Files* no.
　　　47 (2002): 23–36.

Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996.

———. "Architecture and Limits." *Artforum* 19, no. 4 (December 1980): 36.

———. "Architecture and Limits II." *Artforum* 19, no. 7 (March 1981): 45.

———. *Bernard Tschumi: Questions of Space*. AA Publications, 2004.

———. "The Architecture of the Event." *Architectural Design: A.D.* 62, no. 1/2 (February 1992): 25–27.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. "Rootedness Versus Sense of Place." *Landscape* 24, no. 1 (1980): 3–8.

———. *Space and Place*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1977.

Turkle, Sherry. "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self." In *Handbook of Mobile Communications
　　　and Social Change*, edited by James Katz. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, Forthcoming.
　　　http://sodacity.net/system/files/Sherry-Turkle_The-Tethered-Self.pdf.

Uzzell, David. "People-Environment Relationships in a Digital World." *Journal of Architectural and
　　　Planning Research* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 94–105.

Walker, Enrique. "Avant-propos: Bernard Tschumi in Conversation with Enrique Walker." *Grey Room* no.
　　　17 (Fall 2004): 119–126.

"Week 39: On Space as a Service | Urbanscale." Accessed July 11, 2012.
　　　http://urbanscale.org/news/2011/09/30/week-39-on-space-as-a-service/.

Wilken, Rowan. "Mobilizing Place: Mobile Media, Peripatetics, and the Renegotiation of Urban Places."
　　　Journal of Urban Technology 15, no. 3 (December 2008): 39–55.
　　　doi:10.1080/10630730802677939.

"Wireless History." *CTIA The Wireless Association*. Accessed October 12, 2012.
　　　http://www.ctia.org/media/industry_info/index.cfm/AID/11508.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Process Imagery and Diagrams

Figure 24. Initial Ideation Sketch.
Here the concept of fragmentation by separating activity using a wall and projections is explored. This rough sketch inspires idea for two contrasting zones within the gallery space. Sketch by Cotter Christian, 2012.
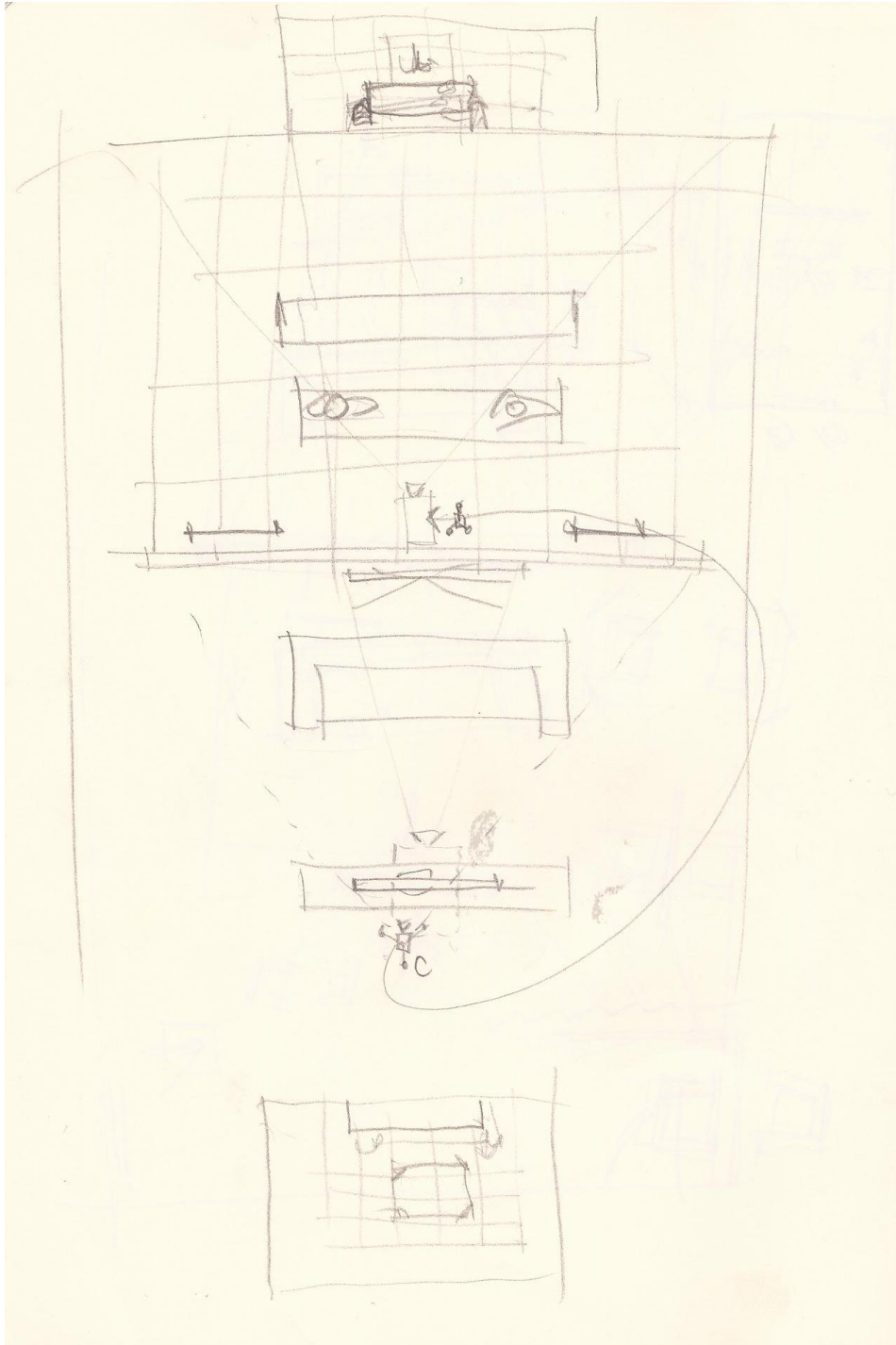
Figure 25. Process Sketch
Drawing used to review locations of projectors, furniture, cameras, and other equipment. Sketch by Cotter Christian, 2012.
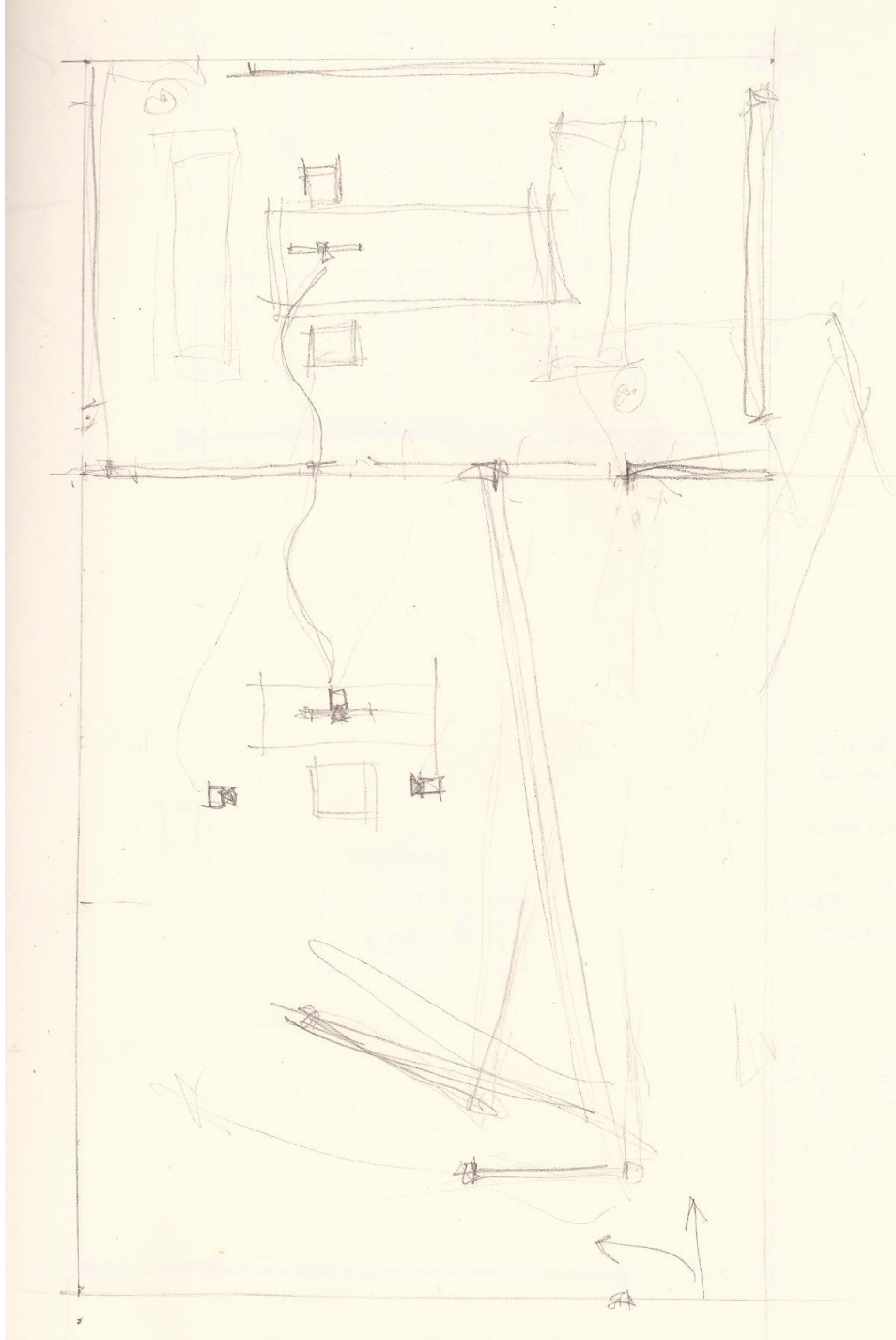
Figure 26. Process Sketch.
Drawn to explore alternative locations for wall, furniture, and various equipment. Sketch by Cotter Christian, 2012.

Figure 27. Digital Marker Rendering.
Image shows preliminary installation concept. Drawn by Cotter Christian, 2012.

In this concept, a room would be built within the gallery space. The interior walls of this room would receive projections of various locales in real time onto white, gridded walls. Visitors would only be able to hear sounds from inside the room and see glow from above the walls, enticing curiosity for further exploration. In order to see what was occurring inside the room, visitors would have to view a website that hosts a webcam video showing the interior of the room in real time. While this installation concept had strong ties to the concept of place and technology, it lacked the desired interactivity and perhaps skewed too strongly toward the concept of surveillance and voyeurism of public/private spaces as facilitated by digital technology.

Figure 28. Digital Marker Rendering of Revised Scheme.
Drawing by Cotter Christian, 2012

In this revised version, the concept of two separate zones (living room and grid room) was explored. The black entry curtains remain, allowing a sense of procession and the establishment of suspension of disbelief for the visitors. In this version, the relationship between the living room zone and the grid room zone was made difficult to define since the overall layout lacked symmetry. Additionally, the manner in which a visitor would view the delayed video was at a small screen located atop a desk. The scale of this interaction did not lend itself to a larger audience since the experience was much more personal. This also posed an issue with the ability to interact with and experience the live video delay. Furthermore, a concern was raised that visitors may not understand why they should

go to the gridded zone.   Also in this version, walls and furniture was covered with thick plastic to signify

the "meaninglessness" of the physical space vis a vis technology's ability to "liberate" us from place

bound experience. During committee reviews, it was revealed that this intervention may be an

unnecessary layer, potentially diluting the message and confusing the intended audience.
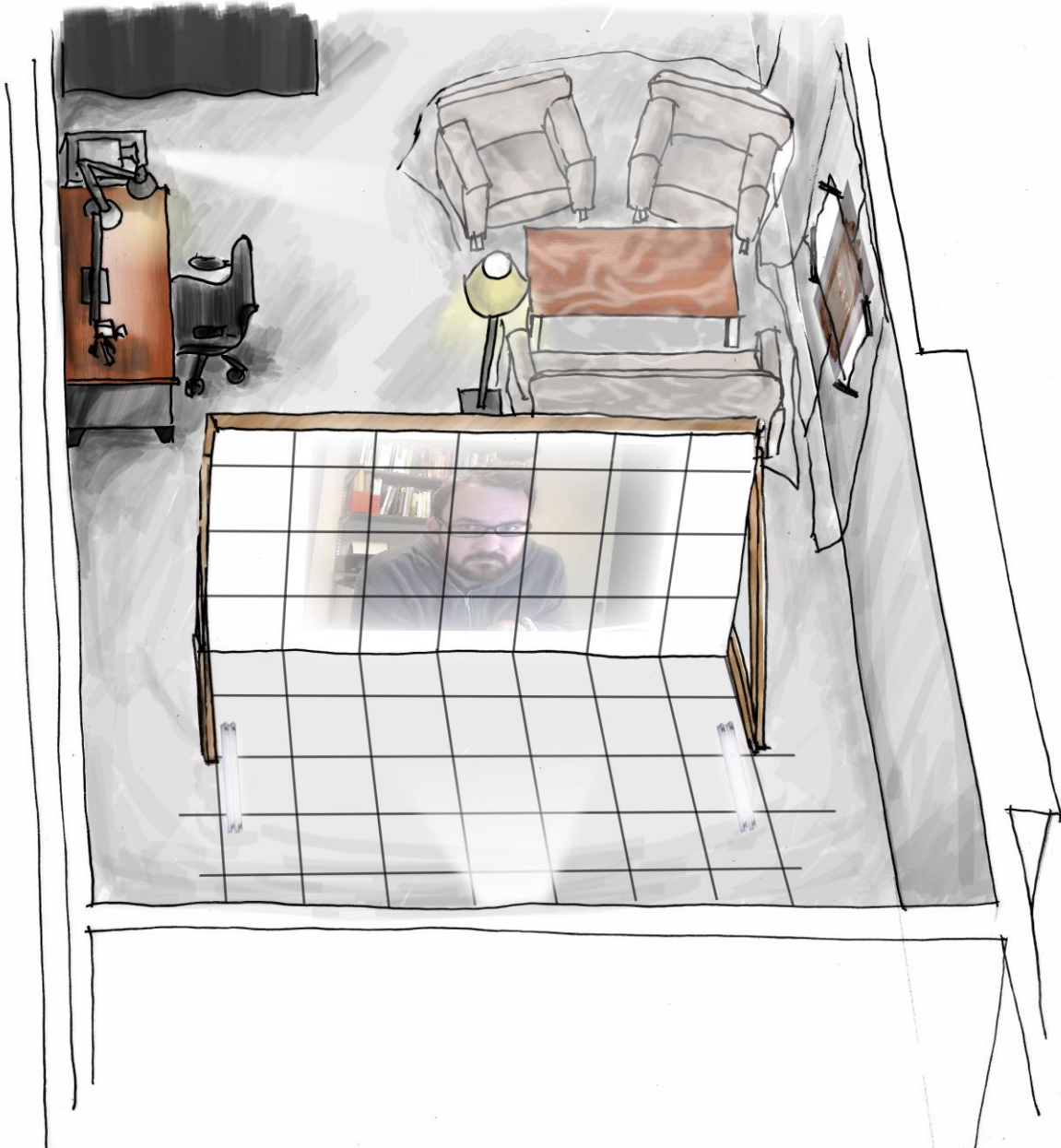

Figure 29. Digital Marker Rendering.
 This drawing shows the gridded area as it was conceived for a preliminary version. Drawing by Cotter Christian, 2012.

In this preliminary version, the projection was reversed and it came from a camera mounted on the desk where the visitor would sit. Again, the placement and scale of experience created by the desk area felt disconnected from the rest of the installation. By reversing the direction of the projection in the gridded area (to the back wall of the gallery) visitors entering the gallery may see glimpses of the projection and be curious to explore the gridded area.

Figure 30. Digital Marker Rendering.
This drawing shows the view as a visitor enters the gallery in a preliminary version. Drawing by Cotter Christian, 2012.

In the rendered view shown in Figure 30, the desk interaction zone is evident as well as the furniture seating area. This scheme was revised to create a more holistic installation experience.

Signage in this version shows stenciled lettering on plywood. This idea was similar to the plastic

previously mentioned and was later abandoned in favor of more conventional vinyl lettering so as not to

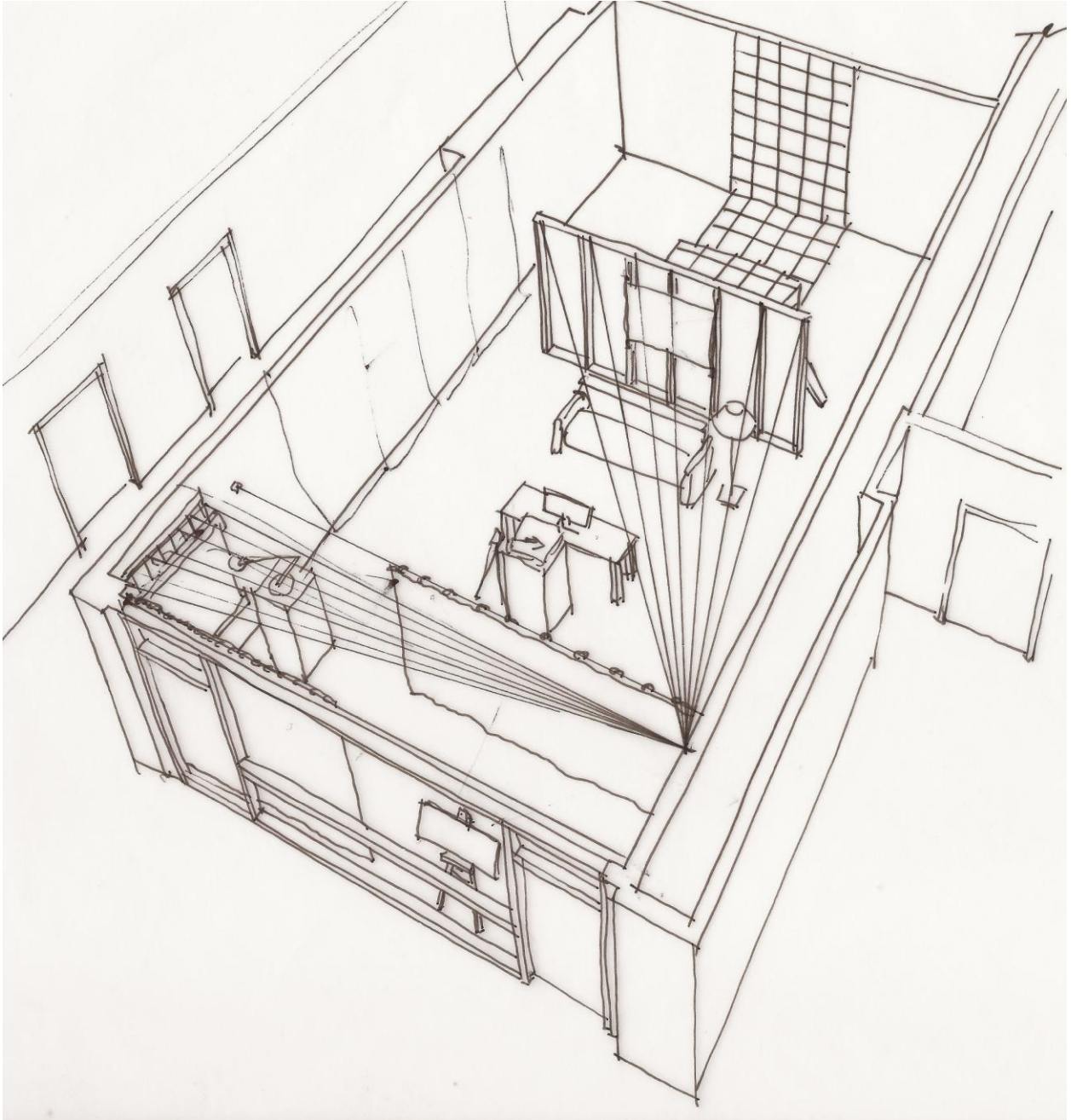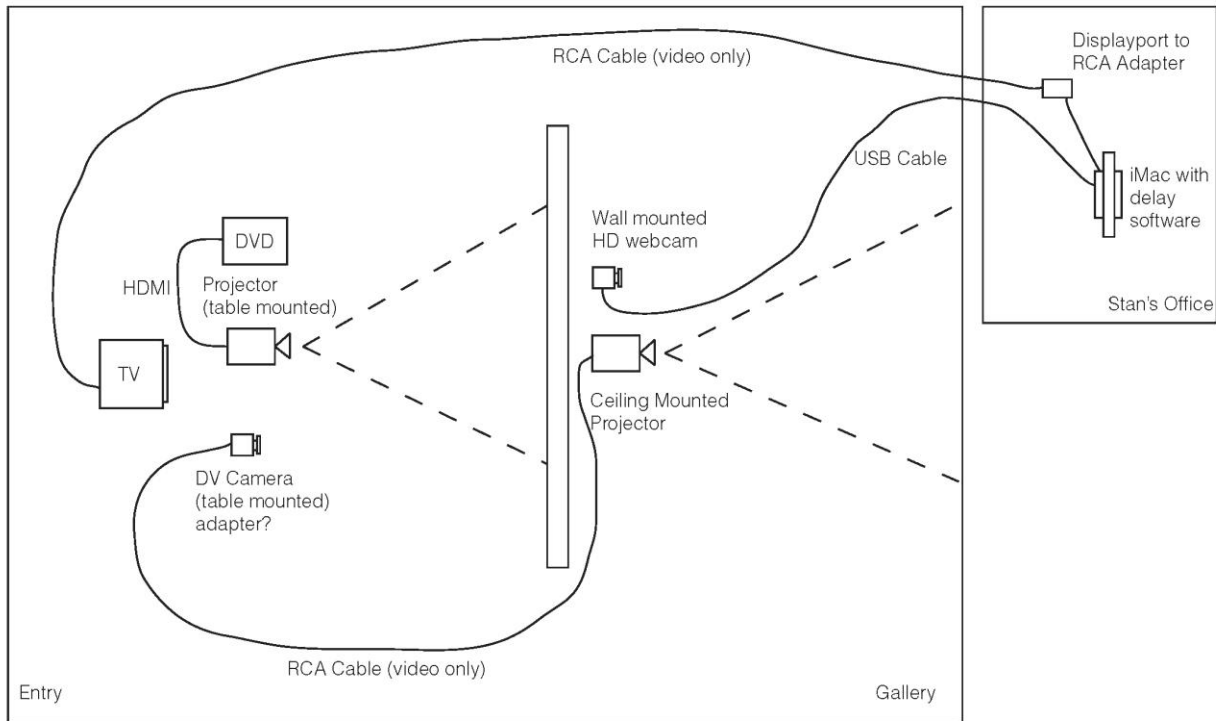distract from the overall installation experience.

Figure 31. Ink Sketch.
This sketch was used to communicate the revised layout. Drawing by Cotter Christian, 2013.

The revised version of the installation called for a more edited furniture grouping, the desk area was removed in favor of a television facing the sofa, and the gridded area accepted a stronger relationship to the living room area. The main, black curtain at the entry was lengthened across the gallery to create a larger transition space and focus visitor attention to the text mounted on the gallery's west wall. As indicated, this text is illuminated by a pedestal mounted lamp. Shown in this sketch are lines representing cables that would extend from the wall to an axis point and then provide the support for the "scroll" which would contain the descriptive text about the installation. This idea was abandoned for fear of distracting and diluting the original intent of the installation. Furthermore, the easel shown in the gallery window was replaced by more conventional vinyl lettering as a response to similar concerns.

Show House 1: You are [t]here
Wiring Diagram
Cotter Christian

Figure 32. Wiring Diagram.
Shows wiring plan for projectors, television, cameras, and other equipment. Diagram by Cotter Christian, 2013.

Once the scheme became more settled, a wiring diagram was created to explain how the live

video delay, projections, DV cameras, and webcam would be installed.

Figure 33. Early Mock-up of Signage for Stencil Version.
This iteration was later abandoned for a more conventional vinyl lettering approach.

Figure 34. Vinyl Glass Graphic Mock-up.
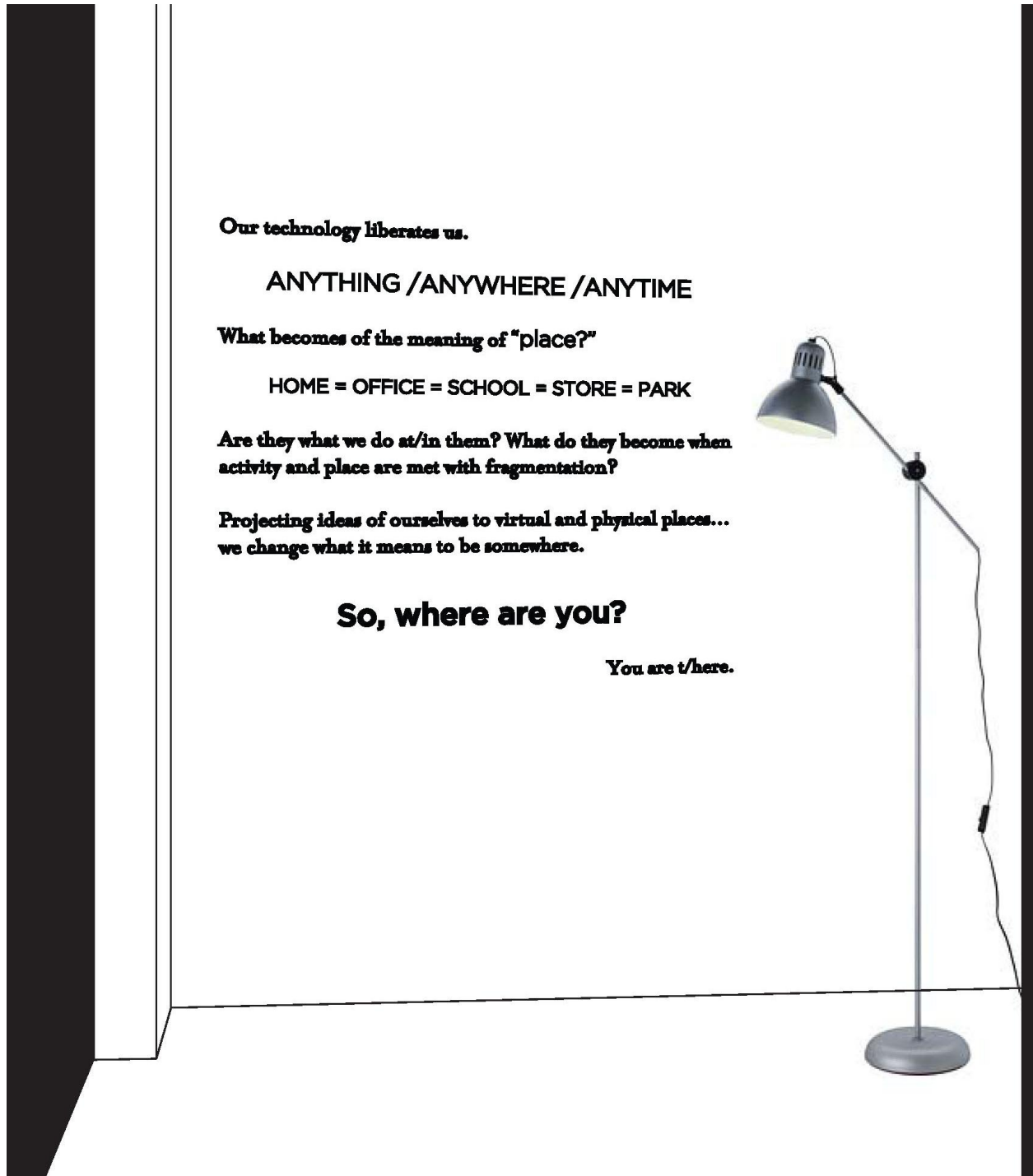Computer rendering by Cotter Christian, 2013.

Our technology liberates us.

ANYTHING /ANYWHERE /ANYTIME

What becomes of the meaning of "place?"

HOME = OFFICE = SCHOOL = STORE = PARK

Are they what we do at/in them? What do they become when activity and place are met with fragmentation?

Projecting ideas of ourselves to virtual and physical places... we change what it means to be somewhere.

So, where are you?

You are t/here.

Figure 35. Wall at Entry Corridor Vinyl Lettering Mock-up.
Computer rendering by Cotter Christian, 2013.

Figure 36. Still from Time-lapse Video for Projection Behind Sofa.
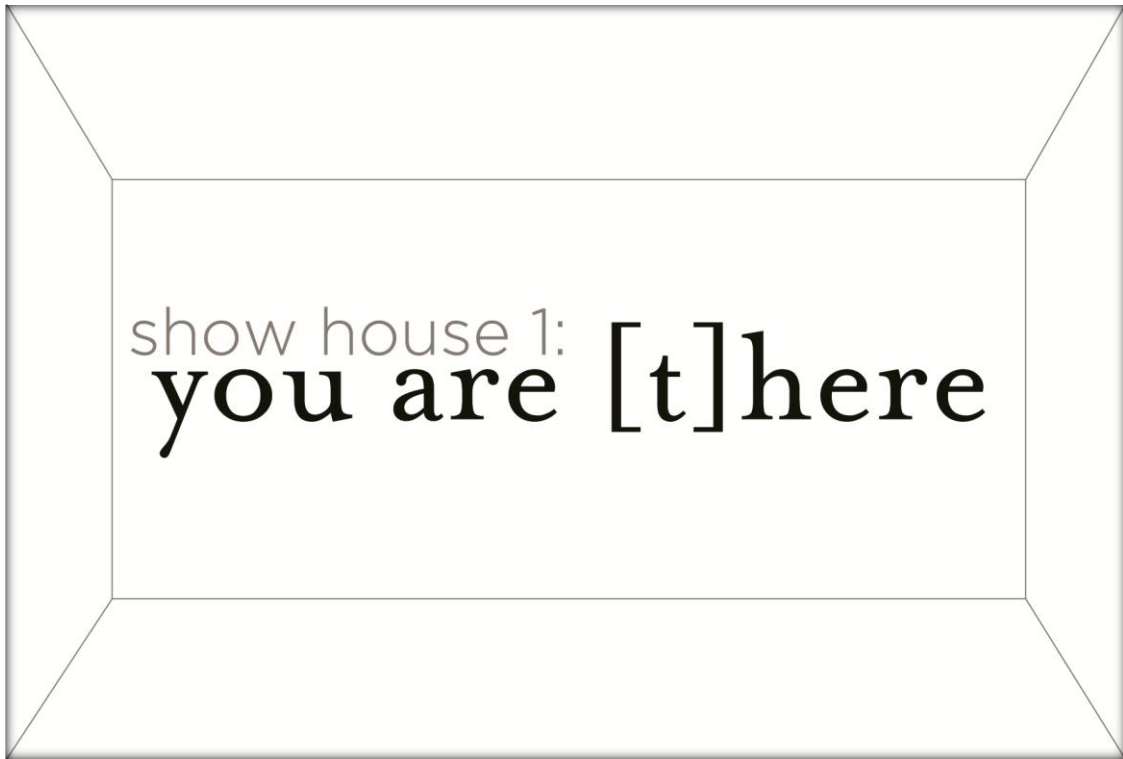Photo by Cotter Christian, 2013

Figure 37. Postcard Front Used for Publicity Purposes.
Design by Cotter Christian, 2013.

show house 1:
you are [t]here

An installation by Cotter Christian exploring digital technology, fragmentation, and interior place.

March 4 - March 8, 2013
Reception: Thursday, March 7, 5-8pm

Welch School Galleries/GSU
10 Peachtree Center Avenue
Downtown Atlanta
hours: M-F, 10-6
closed S/Su and university holidays
www2.gsu.edu/~wwwgal/

Located at the corner of Gilmer Street &
Peachtree Center Avenue, within walking distance
of the GSU and Five Points MARTA stations.

more info: cotterchristian.com

A requirement of the Master of Fine
Arts degree of Georgia State University.

Georgia State
University

Figure 38. Pubicity Postcard Back View.
Design by Cotter Christian, 2013.
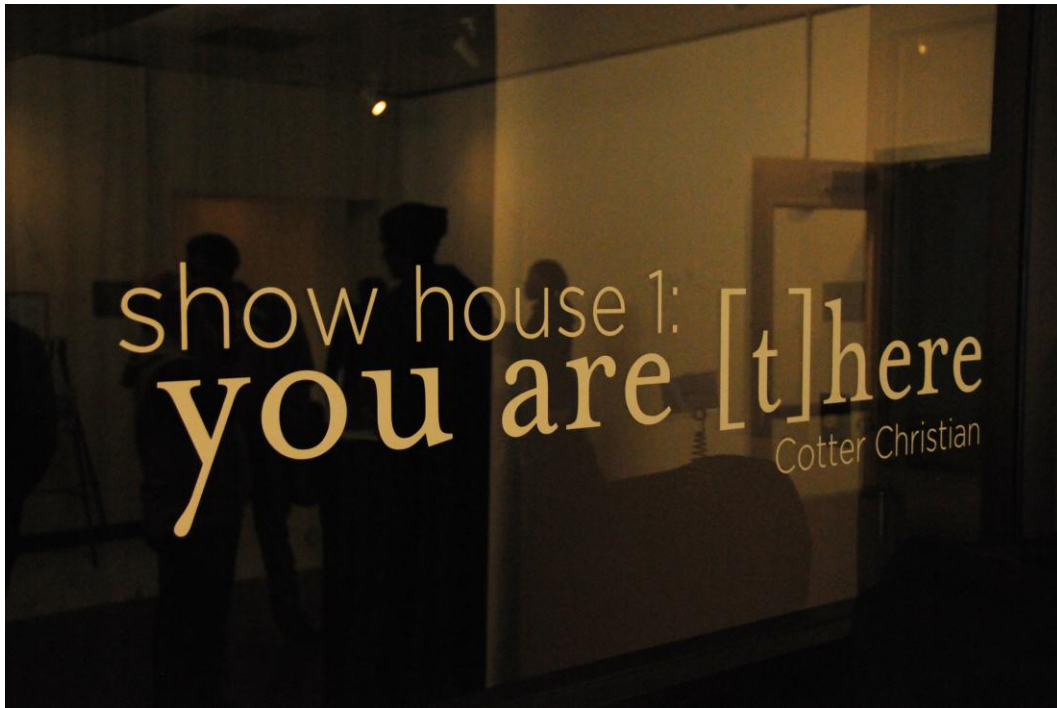
Appendix B: Installation Photographs

Figure 39. Entry Show Title Signage on Glass Storefront.
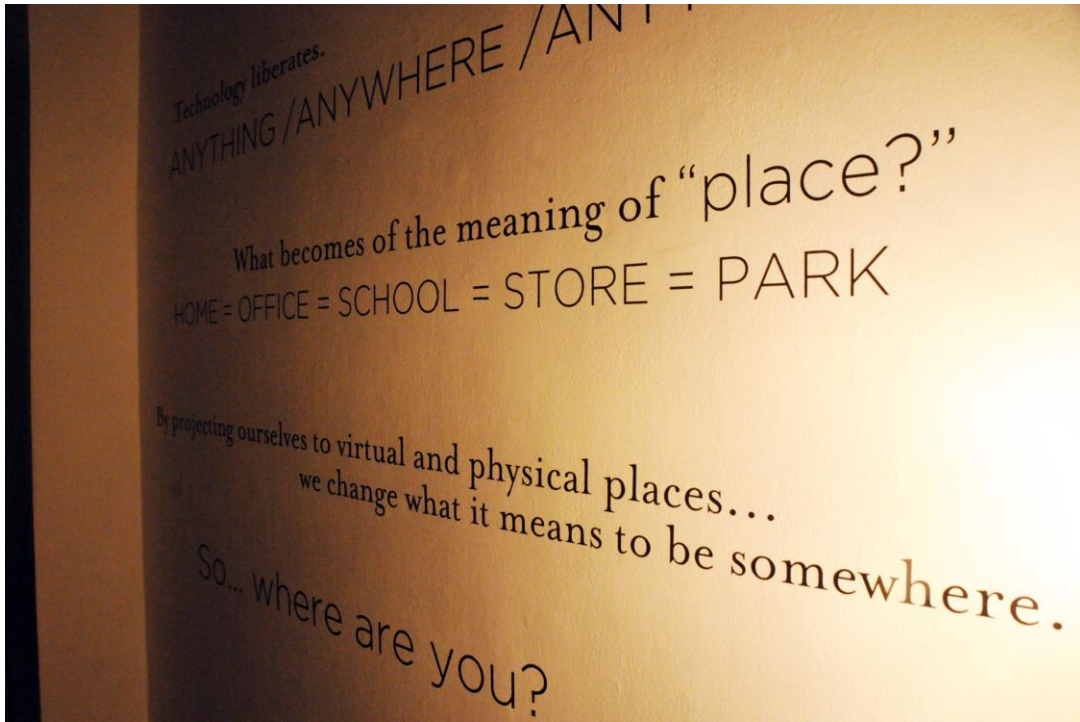Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 40. Vinyl Text at Installation Entry Transition Space.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 41. Installation Photograph of Living Room Area.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 42. Installation Photograph of Gridded Area.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 43. Installation Photograph Showing Relationship Between Zones.
Photo by Cotter Christian, 2013.

Figure 44. Visitors Interacting With Projection of Other Visitors Seated on Sofa.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 45. Close-up View of Projection on Back Gallery Wall in Gridded Area.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 46. Visitor on Sofa Watching Live Delayed Video on Television.
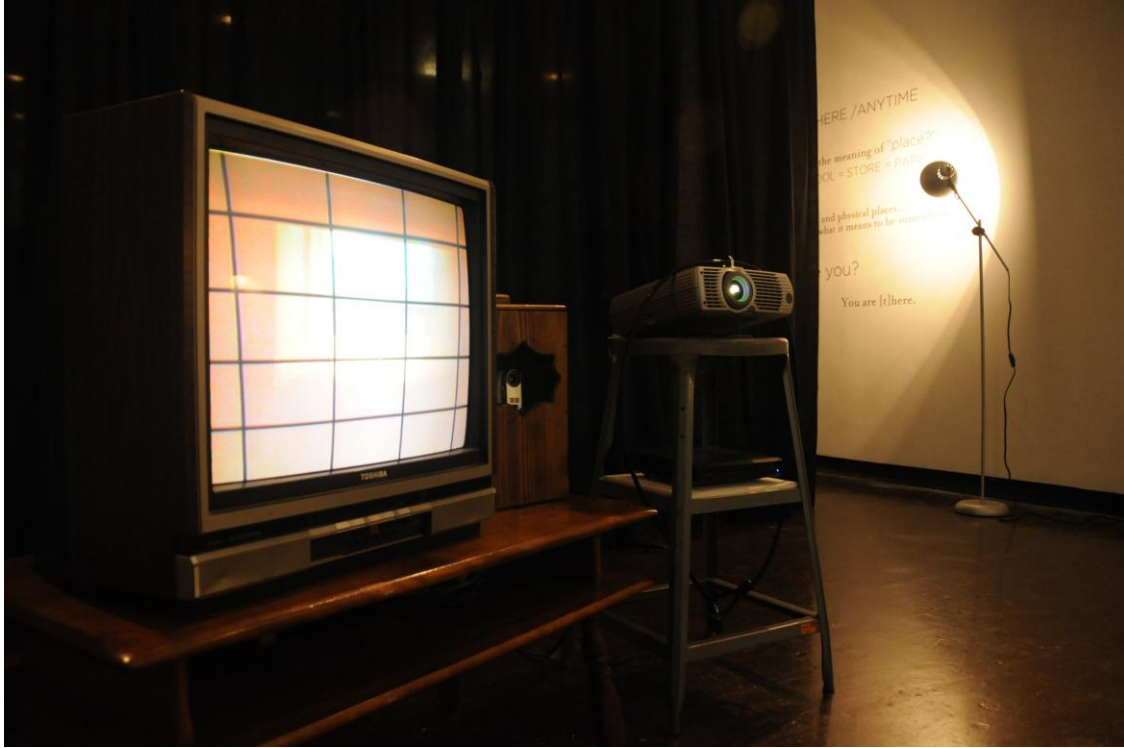Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 47. View of Television, Camera Enclosure, and Table.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.

Figure 48. Visitors Engaging With Video Delay and Gridded Projection Area.
Photo by Yue Zhao, 2013.