

**ON THE (PAINTERLY) INTERRUPTION OF PROJECTED IMAGES:
BODILY ENGAGEMENT AS DISCONTINUOUS TRANSITION**

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Abstract:

This practice-based project considers what happens when projected video/film is placed in combination with drawing, and vice versa. The research conceives of the staging of video projection installations and related works in terms of their spatial and temporal dimensions. The main approach both in my practice (which focuses on drawing and video installation) and writing, aims to realign the layers of projected images in which bodily engagement performs as discontinuous transition. Since filmic media dematerialize the trope of bodily engagement, the drawing activity seeks its way of survival through performativity, promoting temporal continuity in a ritual manner. The text considers selected works by Pipilotti Rist, Dennis Oppenheim, VALIE EXPORT, Peter Campus, Joan Jonas, and Pablo Picasso in detail. Rist's work is examined and critically interrogated as an example of immersive illusionistic video installation. Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* is considered as an example of kinetic transmission through the sensory body, which creates layers of images and screens (or interfaces). Using the physicality of projection, VALIE EXPORT's *Auf+Ab+An+Zu* expands its filmic images into the real space, in which participants are invited to mark the real space of the screen. The text asks how this work reconfigures the space-time of its multiple performative elements. Peter Campus's work is introduced as a productive example of the possibilities of closed-circuit installation. By manipulating the materiality of the screen, Joan Jonas's complex video performance installations take this possibility even further, generating the screens' own spatiality and temporality, as in the work *Glass Puzzle*, which is described in detail. Both of my text and practice focus on the materiality of the screen and consider how it can be rethought or restaged through bodily engagement.

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ON THE (PAINTERLY) INTERRUPTION OF PROJECTED IMAGES: BODILY ENGAGEMENT AS DISCONTINUOUS TRANSITION



Fig.1: Yu-Sheng Ho (2013) *I,I,I*. London.
Final exhibition: three video installations

Introduction:

In the development of this research project, a number of artworks were introduced (both in the text and in the practical element of the research) that used light projected onto a variety of surfaces functioning as screens, often in complex relationships with bodies, cameras, projectors and screens. Since this project is primarily interested in projected moving images in a spatial setting, the materiality of the screen is crucial. Hence most of my artworks use more than one screen or surface. As the projections fall across several screens, the real spaces in-between the screens are emphasized. These spaces invite viewers to move in-between the screens and to circulate around different planes on which the projection falls. In this way, the multiple screens function not as fixed surfaces for showing immersive images or coloured light, but rather perform as interruptions that block, refract and

disturb the projections or destabilise the focus of the images. In my own works, these interruptions often prevent or defer the observer's realization of a complete perspective upon the projected images. The phrase 'bodily engagement as discontinuous transition' in my subtitle refers to artists' or participants' performative bodies that intervene in the real time-space of the projected light installations. I describe this as a discontinuous transition in the sense that the installations are constructed in a non-linear style in which bodies (both in the filmic images and in the installation space) separate and also relate different durations and layers of space.

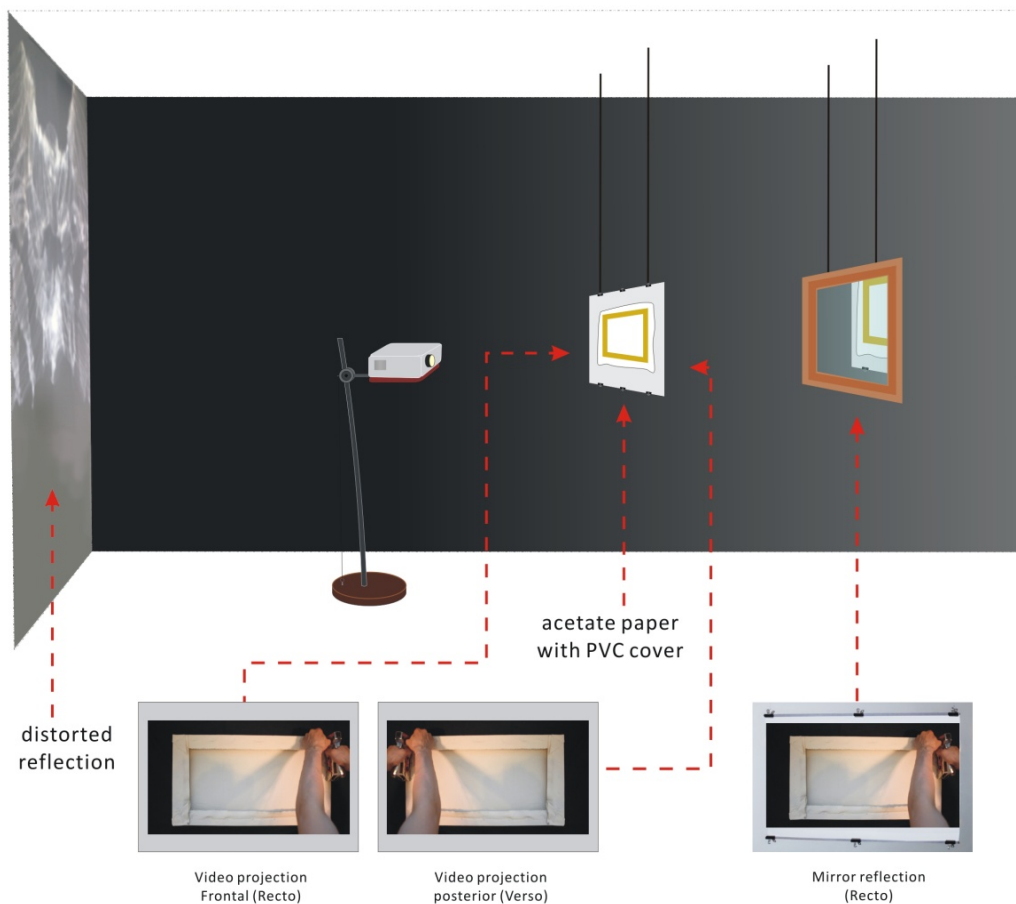


Fig.2: Yu-Sheng Ho (2013) *There was a Painting*. London.

Medium: video projection, acetate paper, mirror, projector stand.

Dimension: variable

Duration: 7:44 min in loop

In my final exhibition *1.1.1* (2013) (see Fig.1), the work titled *There was a Painting* (see Fig.2 & Fig.3) consisted of a projector installed on a constructed stand from which a video was projected onto two aligned screens. The nearer screen was a very thin white acetate sheet with a PVC cover. Because of its transparency, the filmic image was shown from both sides (the recto and verso) and also created a distorted reflection onto the wall behind the projector (see Fig.2 & Fig.3). The farther screen took the form of a mirror which made a reflection of the first screen and the filmic projection that fell on the nearer screen (the recto). The filmic projection was a short clip of two hands stretching a canvas, which was filmed only from the back side of the canvas. The video clip ends with a hand holding a brush and making a simple black line on the canvas. Because the flip side of the nearer screen showed the same video (left-right reversal), the front of the canvas remained unseen, as if hiding or disappearing in between the dual surfaces of the screen. However, the further mirror screen, which showed the reflection of the first screen, transported the frontal surface of the canvas to an imaginary location beyond the screen. In this respect, the material condition of the screen played a pivotal role in expanding the dimensions of the projected images, both in their physical and virtual aspects. The hybridity of visual and spatial stimuli in this work prevent passive spectatorship.

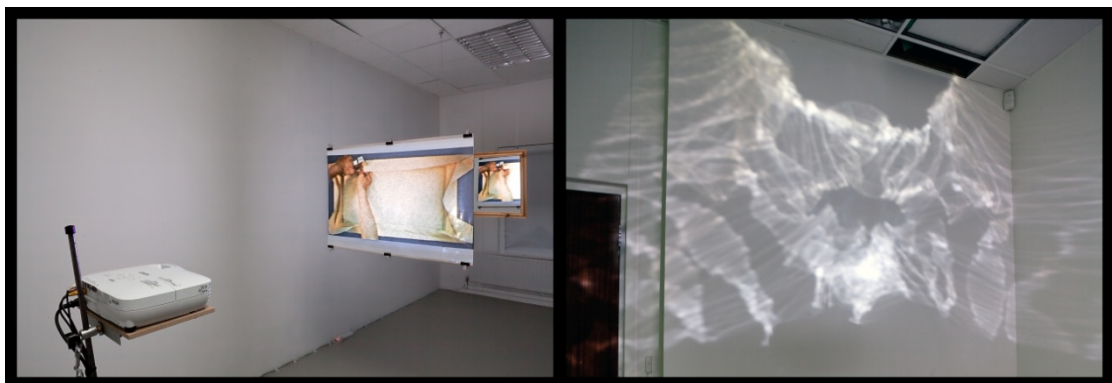


Fig.3: Yu-Sheng Ho (2013) *There was a Painting*. London.

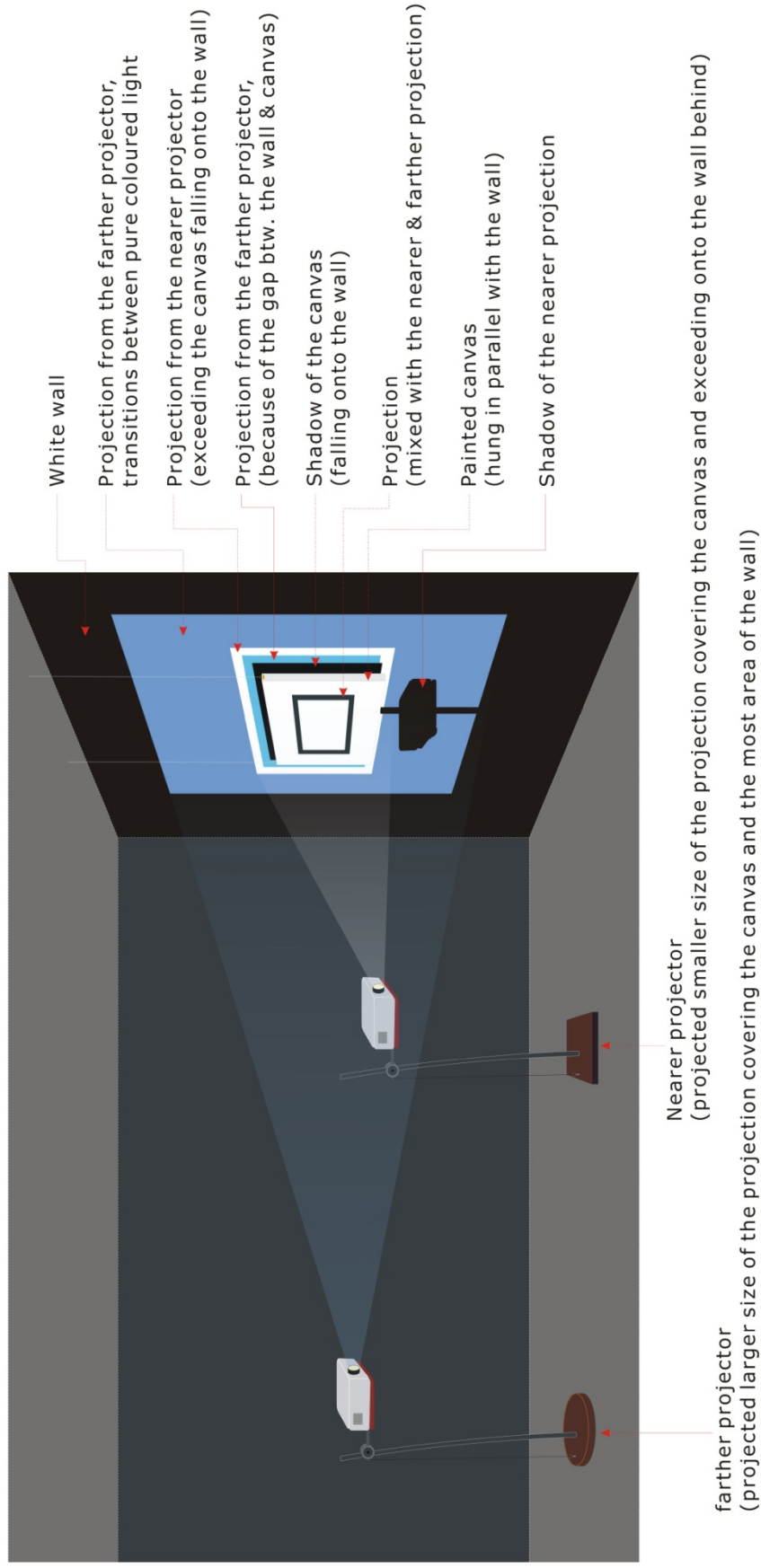


Fig.4: Yu-Sheng Ho (2013) *Framing*. London.

Medium: projection with two projectors, painted canvas, projector stands

Dimension: variable

Duration: 4:27 min / 1 min (unsynchronized) in loop

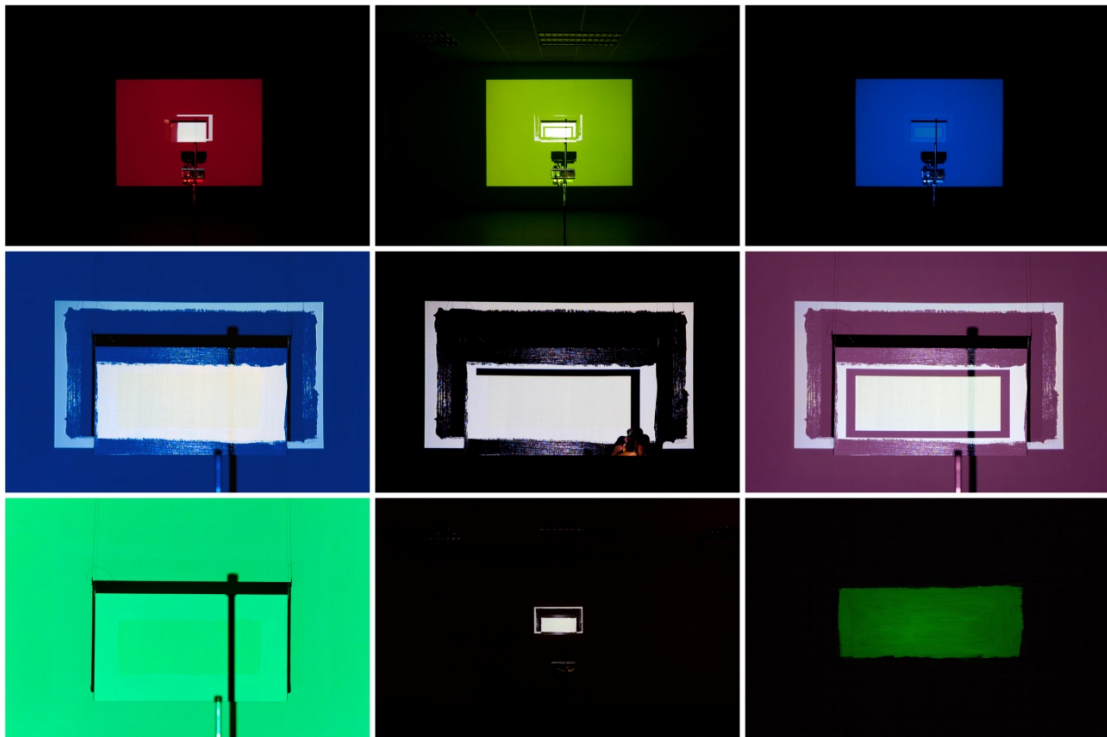


Fig.5: Yu-Sheng Ho (2013) *Framing*. London.

A second work titled *Framing* (Fig.4 & 5) consisted of two unsynchronized looped projections onto a painted canvas, which hung in parallel with the wall with a recognizable gap between the canvas and the wall. The two projections were aligned in the same direction toward the wall. The light from the first projection fell on the canvas as well as the wall behind. The first projection is a looped sequence that follows the hue transitions between pure coloured light. At some moments in the sequence it is difficult to perceive the physical edges of the canvas or distinguish the canvas from the wall behind. As with the previous work, this installation drew the viewer's attention to the physicality of the screens and their projections.

The main concern of this research project started from investigating painting's relation to projected installations. Both painting and projected installation can share a similar discourse in terms of the image's physicality (pigment and light) and

supports (canvas and screen). Although the comparison between painting and projected installations oriented the project to begin with, this changed in the course of the research. From the experimental development of my practice, I began to realize that the references to painting in my installations actually drew attention to the materiality of the screens rather than to the form or aesthetic history of painting as such. In other words, the function of the painting references was to emphasize the physicality of the screens and surfaces on which the projections fell.

Even though our living environment is increasingly overwhelmed by all kinds of screens, we are used to paying no attention to them as material surfaces. Because we are used to privileging the screened imagery we overlook the materiality of the screen itself. According to one common-sense understanding, the contemporary image environment is divided into two different territories: the virtual one inside the screen and the real one outside it. My installations attempt to fuse these two territories and to break down this separation. The research considers how artworks can perform similar complex fusions in this sense. The primary question of this research is how to establish a physical condition which allows a bodily engagement that can realign or challenge the hierarchy of the layers of screens in relation to their filmic imagery.

Four important examples in the text will be Dennis Oppenheim, VALIE EXPORT, Joan Jonas and Pipilotti Rist. My concept of bodily engagement will be developed in detail by examining Oppenheim's 1971 work *Two Stage Transfer Drawing*. In this work, Oppenheim drew a pattern on his daughter's back and she in turn tried to duplicate the same pattern onto the wall. For me, the work is about utilizing bodies as spatial and temporal transitions.

VALIE EXPORT's work *Auf+Ab+An+Zu* (1968) involves the live event of participatory practice in drawing with a filmic projection. The audience was invited to spontaneously draw directly onto a paper screen while the projection visualized but sometimes shadowed the screen. The question arises as to whether we should see it as a unique filmic production on the screen or a performance of painting practice on stage. Or more precisely, what is its origin: the instructions from the artist or the participants' imprint of hand drawing with the projection? A series of questions will be opened out from here.

By introducing Joan Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* (1973), I would like to demonstrate the possibility to re-engage filmic imagery through the physicality of the screen. In this work, Joan Jonas together with collaborator Lois Lane performed synchronized movements as an imaginary mirror effect. The screen is utilized as the key element for repositioning the body at different points in space and time.

In terms of corporeal embodiment, Pipilotti Rist may be widely recognized as one of the most significant video artists who exploit the materiality of the projected moving image while emphasizing the physical intrusion of the audience's spectatorship. Unlike James Turrell's works, which heighten phenomenological perception but present a certain quality of purity, Rist stimulates the audience's sensory experience by vivid use of her body, environmental projection or interweaving screens. All of these create an exotic realm of visual immersiveness but with the filmic element still more or less in a cinematic style. Despite her stated intention to "discover new ways of configuring the world, both the world outside and the world inside"¹, as a spectator, I fail to recognize any connection

¹ Sanders, M., (2006) *Pipilotti Rist: Stay Metal*. Another Magazine, Autumn/Winter. p.431.

between the world outside and the world inside through “rethink[ing] the very nature of the medium itself.”² The content of the image and its physicalized environment, in which the audience is able to touch or intrude, are actually isolated as two different realities. The audience can only engage the fictional figure in the manner of what Elisabeth Bronfen called the “voyeuristic gaze.”³ In order to declare the desire to peep, Rist intentionally sets a distance between the sealed narrative and the open public, like the work *A Peek into the West - A Look into the East* (1992-2011), which polarizes the viewer’s perception. Therefore, I introduce Pipilotti Rist’s works in the first chapter as a negative example in order to clarify what I do and do not mean by proposing bodily engagement. Once again, the primary question of this research is how to establish a physical condition which allows a bodily engagement that can realign or challenge the hierarchy of the layers of screens in relation to their filmic imagery.

Pipilotti Rist

Video projection or video installation might be recognized as the main stream in terms of contemporary phenomena in projected moving image. The art world is not only dominated by its power of digitalization, which frees the image from celluloid’s indexical function, but also expanded by its diversity of formats. Oriented also by its virtualization with the content of the imagery, the digitalized image takes over the function of film and challenges its authority in every aspect. It was very interesting to see McCall’s digital re-make and reinterpretation of *Line Describing A Cone* at the Tate Modern (2012). If there was a possibility of an intimate relationship between the operator and the filmic apparatus of camera plus projection plus screen,

² Sanders, M., (2006) *Pipilotti Rist: Stay Metal*. Another Magazine, Autumn/Winter. p.431.

³ Rist, P, (2011) *Pipilotti Rist: eyeball massage*. edited by Stephanie Rosenthal; with essays by Konrad Bitterli ... [et al.]. London: Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre. P. 116.

then that possibility of bodily engagement was reduced with video, in the sense of virtualization. In a recorded video the embodied engagement is possible only in relation to its external apparatus, such as the screen and the projected light. Following Wanda Strauven, we can trace a contrast between early cinematic devices such as zoetrope or praxinoscope where the only physical involvement with the hand operation of mechanism and the contemporary condition which promote physical interaction with the screen image. This experimental exploration in physical engagement is also actively developed by artists in 60s and 70s, like VALIE EXPORT, Carolee Schneemann, Joan Jonas, Dennis Oppenheim Peter Campus and Dan Graham, but was more focused on the performative body. After the gap of late 70s and early 80s, Swiss artist, Pipilotti Rist becomes one of the successors in relation to the projected moving image and bodily engagement but expands into the gallery's physical space. Rist has been utilizing the materiality of video projection as physical medium to reconfigure the world, "both the world outside and the world inside."⁴ Therefore, the screen is no longer the last part of the apparatus for video projection but the interface between the virtual world inside and the physical world outside by inviting viewer's physical interaction. From her works, Rist's body becomes the main character to mediate the narrative of her creative environment. With huge projections on the wall, multiple screens or small projections inside a sculptural object, the projections not only constitute the viewer's sensorium, but also create an illuminated environment as an organic form. Unlike the cinematic setting, the viewer's body is invited to walk, stand, or lie inside the spatial dimension of the medium. On one hand, the participants are encouraged to choose how they would like to engage with the work or with other participants. But on the other hand, they are quite passive in terms of their perception and also interaction with the moving

⁴ Sanders, M., (2006) *Pipilotti Rist: Stay Metal*. Another Magazine, Autumn/Winter. p.431.

image. The viewers or participants become more like the exotic intruders who penetrate Rist's video world of fantasy or imagination. Their perspective actually maintains what Elisabeth Bronfen describes as the camera's "voyeuristic gaze"⁵ to fulfill the inner desire of peeping but to be forced to engage in public gallery space (or inside Rist's private world) with other participants. Even though Rist "disturbs [the video] effects"⁶ by the disruption of a performance or editing technical effect, such as adding video type noise, distorting the voice or applying coloured filter... etc, these interruptions can partially stimulate the awareness of "the very nature of the medium itself"⁷ but hardly be connected to physical contact. The participant's body can merely create physical interaction with the content of the video images and can only "metaphorically (enter) the picture,"⁸ a tendency toward more psychological imagination.



Fig.6: Pipilotti Rist (2010) *Layers Mama Layers*.
Installation at Luhring Augustine,

⁵ Rist, P, (2011) *Pipilotti Rist: eyeball massage*. edited by Stephanie Rosenthal; with essays by Konrad Bitterli ... [et al.]. London: Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre. p. 116.

⁶ Rist, P, (2011) *Pipilotti Rist: eyeball massage*. edited by Stephanie Rosenthal; with essays by Konrad Bitterli ... [et al.]. London: Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre. p. 116.

⁷ Pipilotti Rist: "When I close my eyes, my imagination roams free. In the same way I want to create spaces for video art that rethink the very nature of the medium itself. I want to discover new ways of configuring the world, both the world outside and the world inside." Sanders, M., (2006) *Pipilotti Rist: Stay Metal*. Another Magazine, Autumn/Winter. p.431.

⁸ Strauven, W., (2006) *The cinema of attractions reloaded*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. p. 167.



Fig.7: Pipilotti Rist (2011) *Administrating Eternity*.
Installation at Hayward Gallery, London

Taking Pipilotti Rist's related works: *Layers Mama Layers* (2010) in New York (see Fig.6) and *Administrating Eternity* (2011) in London (see Fig.7): as examples, with layers of fabric screens hanging in the exhibition space, the multiple projections were arranged freely from different angles, which covered most of the environmental space except the ceiling. *Administrating Eternity* is derived from *Layers Mama Layers* and devised exclusively as a new work for the Hayward Gallery. With the hanging screens resembling "forest of textiles,"⁹ the video projections penetrated through the space because of the fragmental screens and their semi-transparency. The videos consist of two major different moving images: one is the spinning geometry form of spiral lines and the other one is filmic (pre-recorded or filmed) landscape with groups of running sheep. Unlike Tony Oursler's works, in which the projected image characterizes the object's surface as "mutated

⁹ Rist, P, (2011) *Pipilotti Rist: eyeball massage*. edited by Stephanie Rosenthal; with essays by Konrad Bitterli ... [et al.]. London: Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre. p. 24.

materialization,”¹⁰ Rist, in contrast, dematerializes the surface of the architectural space by utilizing projection’s materiality to fill the exhibition space and visually dislocates the spatial dimension of the architecture.

While the participants enter the environmental space of projections, the moving images are “diffused”¹¹ (or are overlapping) across the screens and also onto the viewers’ bodies. The boundaries of the projections are blurred and dissolved by the fragmental layers of the semi-transparent fabrics (the screens) and also the participants’ moving bodies. Interweaving with the lights and shadows, the participants’ bodies are transformed into something like mobile screens. Their bodies thus bring a sense of physicality to the projection and also re-visualize the content of the projection as partial fragments of the imagery contingently. This condition of interactive contingency breaks the traditional linear format of the video display, which requires full attention from the beginning to the end.

With the looping duration of the video, the mobile bodies take up the heterogeneous role of interrupting both the images of the video projection and also the environmental space. However, this active engagement quickly becomes problematic because of the non-relationship between the content (narrative) of the image and the action of the participant’s body. This engaged body in relation to the fragmental projections, which alters the configuration of the image, is maintained at the perceptual level in terms of the bodily transformation of the image. Even though a flock of sheep in Rist’s video functions like the recognizable subject in the sense of the reflection of the reality, which becomes the measurable reference to emphasize

¹⁰ Oursler, T., (2002) *The influence machine*. / conversation by Tony Oursler with Louise Neri, text by Carlo McCormick. London/New York: Artangel/Public Art Fund. p. 34.

¹¹ Rist, P, (2011) *Pipilotti Rist: eyeball massage*. edited by Stephanie Rosenthal; with essays by Konrad Bitterli ... [et al.]. London: Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre. p. 24.

the differences between each layer of the screen, the participant is still hardly building up the bodily relationship in between. Comparing to Bill Viola's work *The Veiling* (1995), the layers of the textile screens reveal both the physical condition of the video projection and its relation to the visual content of the image. The dynamic sizes of the projected images in relation to their screens, the descending focus or the quality of the projection surfaces are no longer parts of the overlooked apparatus but rather the physical elements of the images, which require full attention to their intermediary nature. Hence, the very first question of this investigation is how to embed the bodily engagement into the layers of the projected moving images through the screens' physicality. From this trace of embodiment, I would like to introduce VALIE EXPORT's work *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)* (1968) as an example to unfold the complex relationship between video/film, projection, body, drawing, screen and canvas. But before turning to the work of VALIE EXPORT I want to make some more general observations on the framework within which bodily engagement can take place in Rist's video installations.

The looping video projection that is characteristic of Rist's and most gallery or museum video, creates a structure of repetition, which closes out the duration as a circling timeline. In contrast with the traditional cinematic display setting up an event like condition, which occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time, the looping video isolates itself from the live time and formulates a self-sustainable temporality, which creates the gap between the contingency of the external reality and its repetition of the internal message. The endless continuation of looped time performs a recognizable circulation, which makes the viewer's subjective perception the measure of the work's duration. In other words, any point in the duration of the video can be the beginning or the end, depending on the

subjective time of the individual viewer's arrival and departure.

The projected light in Rist's installations, such as *Administrating Eternity* (2011), physicalizes the looping video, which expands into the real space. The work sets up a basic difference between the repetition of the video imagery and the possible spontaneity of the bodily engagement from the participant in relation to the space and the floating screens. Therefore, there is no longer any beginning or end but a continuing evolution of the work by the external environment. With the participant's engagement, this openness of bodily interaction with the installation is, however, in sharp contrast to the closeness of the repeated video sequence. In other words, the possibility of bodily interaction with the material conditions of the sculpturally and environmentally staged projection is dissociated and separated from the content of the video itself. Nevertheless, the sculptural volume of the projection is still shaped by the dynamic transformation of the video image. Hence, the physical condition of the projection is controlled by the looping duration of the video, which functions like a subjective framework because of its power of visualization and its recognizable repetition (the epistemic pattern, the shape). Therefore, through the physicalization of a projected video, the looping duration not only reframes the temporal structure of the imagery but also reshapes its spatial dimension as an invisible framework, which is similar to the framework of a canvas, which determines its physical condition: the size or the shape, and also its conceptual separation: the inside and the outside.

Under the framework of looping video, the bodily engagement with the sculptural and material condition of the projection actually interrupts the consistency of the repeated video. This disruption from the intrusive participant, on

one hand, reconfigures the image of the video through the engagement of the physicalized projection, but on the other hand, creates the hierarchical and kinetic relationship between the image of the video, the image of the projection and the image of the participant's body. As a result, this looping condition of the video projection suppresses the uniqueness of the narrative of the video, but implies the need for the viewers to move around the installation and so to create their own physical interruptions of the installation. The focus on the need for physical movement directs the viewer's attention to the projected image's materiality and physicality. With the bodily engagement, the interaction between the participant's physical touch with the projection and their kinetic relationship with the image suggests an intimate transference through the light of the projection. This transferability makes it possible to privilege the participant's body and give it the central role of physically interacting with the image.

However, what kind of kinetic relationship does this bodily engagement create? How does this transferability change the viewer's perspective? Moreover, if it is possible to make connection between two or even more different bodily engagements with this transferability, how can we realign this kinetic relationship between the body and the image into multiple dimensions (layers) of images? In order to investigate these questions, I would like to firstly introduce Picasso's light drawing, which promotes bodily interaction with the filmic images, then Dennis Oppenheim's unique work *Two Stage Transfer Drawing: Dennis and Eric Oppenheim* (1971), which formulates a new bodily engagement with the drawing practice.

Pablo Picasso's Light Drawing

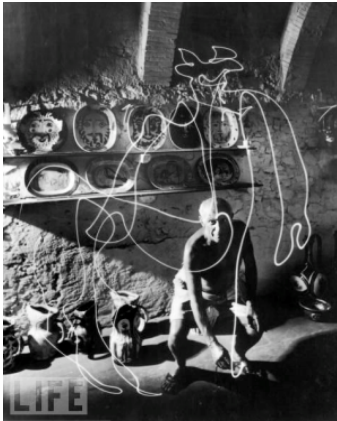


Fig. 8:
a centaur drawn with light, 1949
Photographer: Gjon Mili,
Pablo Picasso at the Madoura in Vallauris, France
49,5 x 39,6 cm (50,6 x 40,8 cm)



Fig. 9:
Space Drawing, 1949
Photographer: Gjon Mili,
Pablo Picasso at the Madoura in Vallauris, France
"On open camera, while Picasso was drawing in
the dark, lights were momentarily flashed three
times." (Mili 1970)



Fig. 10:
Space Drawing, 1949
Photographer: Gjon Mili,
Pablo Picasso at the Madoura in Vallauris, France

In terms of bodily interaction, how could the temporal and spatial qualities of movements be indicated in the filmic images or even a still photograph? "Photography" according to Barry Sandywell, "is also the realm of film (filmic photo-mimesis). Hence, 'movies' as a hybrid 'visual-acoustic mirror', a filmstrip of seriated 'snaps' giving the illusion of continuous movement and narrative

plentitude.”¹² This is technically evident nowadays since the DSLR camera (digital single-lens reflex camera) is able to capture video at 1080p/30 (1920x1080 resolution at 30 fps) thus combining the functions of still and movie camera.¹³ One notable example for me is Picasso’s light drawing series of 1949¹⁴, which was photographed by Gjon Mili in Picasso’s workshop at the Madoura Pottery in Vallauris, France, while Mili was assigned by *Life* magazine’s editor, George P. Hunt.¹⁵ Picasso’s first light drawing done in 1949 and known as the Centaur (see Fig. 8), is both a depiction of an image and a snapshot of Picasso’s body in its surrounding environment. In Mili’s book *Picasso’s Third Dimension* (published in 1970), he described this cooperative drawing practice as Picasso’s “space drawings”— “[m]omentary happenings inscribed in thin air with a flashlight in the dark”.¹⁶ (see Fig. 9). Because of the limitation of the technical exposure, an almost fully dark space is required for the shooting process. This blind situation, in which light tracks immediately vanish, forces the artist to engage the drawing process in a performative condition. First, the hand’s choreographing movement has to be arranged according to the artist’s imagination, or as Edward Steichen wrote: “... the completed picture of what he himself saw only in his mind’s eye.”¹⁷ Without any referential paths, the artist’s body is dancing in the darkness by following his instinct. As Anne Baldassari described, there is no room for “rectifications” or “hesitation”¹⁸.

¹² Sandywell, B., (2011) *Dictionary of Visual Discourse: A Dialectical Lexicon of Terms*. Farnham: Ashgate. p. 473.

¹³ The Japan camera producing company, Canon, announced the future of photography: 21.1 MP EOS 5D Mark II which offers Full HD video capture in 2008.

http://www.canon.co.uk/About_Us/Press_Centre/Press_Releases/Consumer_News/Cameras_Accessories/EOS_5D_MarkII_Press_Release.asp

¹⁴ Actually, this experimental exploration in light drawing/writing was first exploited by the early avant-garde artist, Man Ray, who made *Space Writing* in 1935.

¹⁵ Mili, G., (1970) *Picasso’s Third Dimension: Photographs and Text*. New York: Triton Press. pp. 10-29.

¹⁶ Mili, G., (1970) *Picasso’s Third Dimension: Photographs and Text*. New York: Triton Press. p. 10.

¹⁷ Baldassari, A. (1997) *Picasso and photography : the dark mirror*. Paris: Flammarion; Houston: Museum of Fine Arts. p. 219.

¹⁸ Baldassari, A. (1997) *Picasso and photography : the dark mirror*. Paris: Flammarion; Houston: Museum of Fine Arts. p. 219.



Fig. 11:
Space Drawing, 1949
Pablo Picasso
Photographer: Gjon Mili,
at the Madoura in Vallauris, France

Picasso's light drawing of a woman (see Fig. 11) is especially interesting because it contains two different images, taken of the same drawing by two separate cameras simultaneously from different angles. One camera was set in front of the drawing (right side), which represents Picasso mental image in reverse (as it were, in a mirror image). The other one was set to the side of Picasso (left side) representing the transverse view of the drawing. By comparing these two images side by side, and with knowledge of the cameras' positions, we could finally grasp the sculptural dimension of the drawing in space, which corresponds to Mili's description: "Light in hand, Picasso moves both body and arm in space, which gives depth to the resulting image."¹⁹ However, I would like to argue that the resulting image fails to manifest the spatial depth of the drawing's sculptural dimension. The flicker of the visible body and the studio space, which is created by a blink of the flashlight, becomes the only signal that allows the viewers to imagine the motion of the lines in relation to the movements of the artist's body. Without visualizing the hand and the body's location, it is almost impossible to retrace the depth of the drawing lines, especially when the darkness of the background has erased the referential physical space

¹⁹ Mili, G., (1970) *Picasso's Third Dimension: Photographs and Text*. New York: Triton Press. p. 22.

(workshop) and equalized the drawing as a flat surface on an invisible plane. That means the overlapping lines of recorded light correspond not with the materiality of its accumulation, nor with any comparable discrepancy of resemblance, but with the moment of un-exposure, which flattens the pictorial layers and also eliminates the dimension of the space. While two or more cameras have the ability to record the drawing from multiple angles simultaneously, the individual photographs they produce could only represent one angle at a time.

One of the main issues in my art work and writing is how to deploy the accumulations of the photographic or video image in order to suggest a model or an analogy for the depth of bodily involvement or performance, which is not based on the literal, physical depth of its spatiality. Picasso's light drawings are suggestive in relation to this because they are drawings directly extended into the third and fourth dimensions. But they are also inadequate in the sense that when they appear in photographs they become very flat. In other words, they depend upon a photographic mediation that eliminates their spatial depth. Therefore they do suggest - but finally fail to offer - bodily engagement in my terms. If performance is like what Peggy Phelan describes: "becom[ing] itself through disappearance"²⁰, then how can we represent the bodily relationship in between the juxtaposition of these two relative images of Picasso's light drawings rather than a fictional imagination? In order to investigate more closely about this question of visualizing bodily relationship, I turn my eye to Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1971).

²⁰ Phelan, Peggy (1992) *Unmarked: the politics of performance*. London; New York: Routledge. p. 146.

Dennis Oppenheim: *Two Stage Transfer drawing*

Instead of functioning as autonomous physical objects in the institution, gallery or museum, Dennis Oppenheim's works usually are displayed in a form of documentation, such as photographs with texts, or video to represent his "ephemeral art."²¹ By challenging the legitimacy and "mortality" of the artistic media or manners, Oppenheim, whom Alanna Heiss called "an alien,"²² placed himself outside established field or genres. Oppenheim's works contributed directly to the reformulation of artistic practice in the 60s and 70s and began his early experimental art practice from the late 60s in New York.²³ Oppenheim was not only undertaking a "voyage"²⁴ over different media "at the furthest limit of resistance and survival"²⁵ but also making the new connection between them, which radically change ways of thinking, methods of making and the perspective of seeing for the viewer, as with works like *Reading Position for second Degree Burn* (1970). Ranging from a diversity of elements, like environmental nature (*Boundary Split* in 1968), body (*Sound Enclosed Land Area* in 1969), or interrogating the artistic genres, like drawing and sculpture, the transition from one element to another not only reconstructs the pattern of our visual perception but also challenges the traditional media-specificities. This attitude placed him in the position of outside observer of

²¹ Heiss, A., (c1992) *Dennis Oppenheim: selected works 1967-90, and the mind grew fingers; with an essay by Thomas McEvilley*. New York: Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum in association with H.N. Abrams. p. 6.

²² Heiss, A., (c1992) *Dennis Oppenheim: selected works 1967-90, and the mind grew fingers; with an essay by Thomas McEvilley*. New York: Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum in association with H.N. Abrams. p. 5.

²³ "the beginning of Dennis Oppenheim's oeuvre is Sitemakers, from 1967." H., A., (c1992), p. 9.

²⁴ "where he undertakes a voyage at the furthest limit of resistance and survival." (Celant 2001). Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.9.

²⁵ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.9.

the art world at the same time.

As Germano Celant writes: “[Dennis Oppenheim’s work] involves a course in which subject is indistinguishable from object, gesture becomes image and sign is interwoven with nature, producing a spectacularization of amazing imaginative power that transforms the territory and boundaries of art.”²⁶ By utilizing his physical body as a productive strategy, the embodiment reflects both of the subject matter and also the object matter of his art works at the same time. However, this materialized embodiment is not necessarily related to the political identity of gendered schemas but is driving toward more self-reflexive manner, which relocates the viewer’s experience in relation to the performative body. Therefore, the gesture is the visual trope of corporeality in a form of image and sign, as Adam Kendon writes “[w]illing or not, humans, when in co-presence, continuously inform one another about their intentions, interests, feelings and ideas by means of visible bodily action”²⁷. In work such as one of the *Aspen Project* (1970), in which Oppenheim filmed his fingernail in close up being pushed onto a nail in the wall, an emphasis on iconic corporeality replaces the materiality of the art object that had been normal in late modernism. This emphasis on the visibility of body creates a new visual sensation, which spectacularizes its appearance in a ritual manner. In other words, Celant sees in Oppenheim’s works like the *Aspen Projects*, a new bodily interpretation, which performs a double agency in relation, as it were, to both subject matter (which would include the memory of touch) and also object matter (which would include the action, the size or the color of the finger). As a result the viewer’s experience in the work by Dennis Oppenheim I will examine is not

²⁶ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.9.

²⁷ Kendon, A. (2004) *Gesture: visible action as utterance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

dominated by an immersion in perceptual illusion but by a notion of ritual depiction in relation to a reflexive manner. One of the significant examples of this development is Oppenheim's cooperative work *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1970) (see Fig.12 & 13), which is concerned with the pictorial transferability from one interface to another, like one body to another, one surface to another, and one sensory system to another.



Fig.12: Dennis Oppenheim

«*Two Stage Transfer Drawing (Returning to a Past State)*» (1971-74)

Super 8mm film transferred to video 2:57 min, colour, silent,

Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Photo: (Dennis Oppenheim, Explorations, Milano 2001)

Here is Oppenheim's description of what happens in the work, which is done by himself and his daughter, Chandra:

Dennis to Chandra Oppenheim. As I run a marker along Chandra's back she attempts to duplicate the movement on the wall. My activity stimulates a kinetic response from her sensory system. I am, therefore, Drawing Through Her. Sensory retardation or disorientation make up the discrepancy between the two drawings, and could be seen as elements that are activated during this procedure. Because Chandra is my offspring and we share similar biological ingredients, her back (as surface) can be seen as an immature version of my

own. In a sense, I make contact with a past state. (Dennis Oppenheim, Explorations, Milano 2001)²⁸



Fig.13: Dennis Oppenheim

«*Two Stage Transfer Drawing (Advancing to a Future State)*» (1971-74)

Super 8mm film transferred to video, 2:48 min, colour, silent,

Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Photo: (Dennis Oppenheim, Explorations, Milano 2001)

Here is another description by Oppenheim of what happens in the work which is a reverse version of the previous work:

Chandra to Dennis Oppenheim. As Chandra runs a marker along my back, I attempt to duplicate the movement on the wall. Her activity stimulates a kinetic response from my sensory system. She is, therefore, Drawing Through Me. Sensory retardation makes up the discrepancy between the two drawings, and could be seen as elements that are activated during this procedure.

²⁸ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.132.

Because Chandra is my offspring and we share similar biological ingredients, my back (as surface) can be seen as a mature version of her own ... in a sense, she makes a contact with a future state. (Dennis Oppenheim, *Explorations*, Milano 2001) ²⁹

While working as summer artist-in-residence with Bruce Nauman at the Aspen Center for Contemporary Art, Colorado during 1970 to 1971, Oppenheim made a series of film and video works, which he later edited as *Aspen Projects* and *Program One to Seven. Two Stage Transfer Drawing (Advancing to Future State and Retreating to a Past State)* (1971) were the one categorized in *Program Six*, which were first shown in the exhibition *Art Systems* (1971) at the Modern Art Museum of Buenos Aires.

Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1970) is traditionally recognized as a video documentation of performances, enacted in collaboration with his offspring (son or daughter in different renditions). In almost three minutes duration for each stage, the practice of transmission in drawing is set to be compared not only visually but also genetically. While Dennis is drawing on Chandra's back with a linear geometric pattern, Chandra is trying to duplicate this "transmission of a pattern"³⁰ on the wall according to her sensations of touch on her back, vice versa. This kinetic response from one body to another realigns the two separated pictorial images in a bodily and also genetic relationship. On one hand, the temporality of the drawing is deployed in a physical duration of time and also expanded into more complex biological status; as Oppenheim says: "my back (as surface) can be seen as a mature version of her own ... in a sense, she makes a contact with a future state." On the

²⁹ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.132.

³⁰ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.16.

other hand, the drawing is divided into and distributed over different surfaces. Even though Oppenheim made an obvious emphasis on the title to state the biological condition, which expanded the work into another dimension of temporality and social relationship, the identity of the performers is less relevant from a purely visual perspective. The role of the visualized bodies indicates that the comparison between the two drawings (the first on the child's back and the second on paper) is primarily a comparison of subjectivities rather than a comparison of materialities. Therefore, the drawing(s) is no longer represented as a purely material production, which performs the totality or wholeness in a reflexive condition of modernity, but rather subverting its objective phenomenon and relocating it in a more complex hybrid, a condition of liminality between object and subject, image and performance, perception and recognition, so on and so forth. Before problematizing the argument in terms of biological relationship, I would like to introduce this work in several different aspects, which are listed as follows.

First, the work is represented as a video to unfold the drawing process as a performative practice in a temporal dimension, which represents the direct bodily engagement and reveals a new form of the figurative: the visualized sensation of touch. In the sense of action painting, Oppenheim's work can be seen as a response to Peter Wollen's analysis of Jackson Pollock, who was interested in polarizing between "materials, with their own 'body', and the images, which through painting were given an alien body, with either a destructive or a revelatory effect."³¹ Because of the direct enactment of the performances and bodies through live video, the materials lost their ability to imply the trope of the alien body. Therefore, the images that are drawn in Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* lose their referential or

³¹ Wollen, P., (1993) *Raiding the icebox: reflections on twentieth-century culture*. London; New York: Verso. p. 75.

semiotic function and emphasize the comparison between the stages of enactment and transmission of the drawing. This, on one hand, can also be seen as “a destructive or a revelatory effect,” but on the other hand, can be realized as an emancipation of the constraint on materiality since the video eliminates the drawings’ material condition. Even though the video image lacks substantial materiality to indicate the alienation of the bodily engagement, the video documentation can still reinterpret or describe the visualized practice of drawing through the re-enactment in time. Beyond the traditional limitation of materiality of the art work, like pigments and their texture, the duration of time (performance/video) plays the essential role in order to perform or reveal this bodily and physical engagement, which visualizes the sensation of touch and the comparable discrepancy between these two drawings.

Second, Oppenheim’s work establishes a question of invisibility. Since this live feedback from the body’s sense of touch could be done with more performers, as in Oppenheim’s later expansion *Three Stage Transfer Drawing* (1972), in which the work is done with three performers, this manual duplication of the pictorial images directly reflects the kinetic movement of the bodily engagement, from one’s body to another’s, from one surface to another, and also from one’s sensory system to another’s. The draughtsman’s physical body replaces visual perception as the new sensory receiver to transfer or to interpret the images through the tactile reception from the back to the sensible drawing hand. Invisibility plays a crucial role in this work. It forces the person who we might call the ‘second draughtsman’ to rely on his or her sensory touch in order to complete this simulation process. This is important because the second draughtsman is no longer depending on his or her visual perception to receive the image.

However, even when the filmic image (or as recorded image) distances the viewer from the immediacy of the touch between bodies, materials and surfaces, these filmic images of the performers' bodies on screen are still able to represent the tactile sensation in a performative way. By giving up the visibility of observation, and substituting the mediation by touch, the layering process of mark-making involves a crucial stage of invisibility. Oppenheim mediates the drawings through the bodies of the performers in the first instance, and through the filmic apparatus in the second. This condition of quasi-invisibility might serve as a breaking point that divides the drawing process into different stages or interfaces. The different layer of image can be transferred and (re)presented on the different surfaces through different bodies or devices. If Dennis Oppenheim can facilitate the sensing body to take the place of vision, can we use other devices to play a similar role in order to expand its possibilities, such as a video camera with the live display of projection in real or delayed time?

Third, unlike other artists' works of body art at that time, which were more focused on the performative body as the protagonist, like Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci, or Joan Jonas, Oppenheim, in contrast, utilized bodies as the transitions to remap the condition of drawing in a form of performative action. Instead of presenting it in a live performance each time the work is shown, Oppenheim chose to use super 8mm film to record the whole practice and display it in a form of cinematic projection onto a single wall, which was later transferred onto video format to be viewed on a TV monitor. I am more interested in approaching and interpreting Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* as a filmic work instead of simply a filmed documentation of a live performance. Understood in this way, the work can be seen as a metaphorical proliferation of screens. This proliferation of screens is an example of what I called the multiplication of layers. Thus the back on

Oppenheim's body, the paper on the wall, the projected surface can also be seen as multiple layers of screens (surfaces).

In Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing* the video erases the drawn pictures' materiality, which originally reflects the trace of bodily engagement, and turns them into the superficial images, the performative action of bodily images from the draughtsman actually bestows the physical intimacy back to the pictorial images but in a form of visual realignment and perceptual sensation. This montage effect of screening is similar to the editing effect of superimposition but in between the virtual and reality. Here, Oppenheim presents us with a possible strategy to realign the video images with the dynamic physical bodies without the limitation of materiality, even just in a metaphorical way. The visual orientation of this realignment creates a new notion of perspective for the viewer to be aware of the physical condition of the drawing practice, which breaks down the distance between the normally absent body (artist), the drawing, the screen and the audience. Instead of solely emphasizing narrative elements of cinematic reproduction, Oppenheim expanded filmic contexts to take into account the spatial and temporal relations of the filmic apparatus, in which the physical condition of this set up becomes relevant and important.

Fourth, instead of pursuing the condition of flatness in drawing (or painting), Oppenheim oriented the work to a new formulation of a kind of layering system, in which the images are accumulated or more precisely realigned (side by side) from different domains of surfaces. Hence, the drawing is no longer limited by the single plane but divided into multiple surfaces. By utilizing the body as unidirectional transition to make the physical realignment between different surfaces of drawing images, the configuration of the drawing is more like a hyper-synthesis of collage in a

tangible and realistic form since we can also see how the bodies are performing this transmission in real time. In other words, the bodies are functioning more like the oil for an oil painting to fuse the pigments and keep them in a certain dynamic condition to reflect its action and movement. Instead of equalizing or neutralizing the heterogeneous layers of imagery (in a broad sense), Oppenheim is building up a new pattern of kinship, which is “breaking down materials or building up an account through images.”³²

A new power relationship of drawing practice is oriented by a pictorial simulation, which depends on the draughtsman’s bodily transferability. If drawing is depending on the pure bodily interpretation with tools or materials, since the draughtsman is divided into two, in order to maintain the two images’ kinship in a bodily relationship, which I call the layering system, Oppenheim cleverly uses the second draughtsman’s body as the surface (receiver) and also a kind of interface (transition) to realign (or bridge) the two drawn images. This transmission builds up kinetic segments from body to body and inevitably creates a systematic strategy of government: the first draughtsman rules the primitive pattern of the image through his leading position as the head of this cooperation, similar to a patriarchal form of “lineage consolidating inheritance and paternity”³³ but without over interrogating on the social identity of gender from the work’s visual appearance. The ability of inheritance is powered by the bodily sensibility and physical interpretability. The first draughtsman can be seen as an independent creator to make its own image, or also a dependent cooperator to deliver the idea or message of the drawing to the second draughtsman. As a result, the condition of the subordinative image on the wall, which is made by the second draughtsman, becomes the parergon, which is

³² Germano Celant in Celant (ed.) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. (2001) Milano: Charta. p.9.

³³ Howie, G., (2010) *Between feminism and materialism: a question of method*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 180.

derivative instead of primary. The second image on the wall is transformed from the first image on the second draughtsman's back. The distortion or differentiation between these two images is a process of physical interpretation through bodily sensory system and kinetic movement. Therefore, the two patterns of the drawing images, which are bound with the kinetic bodily enactment, are comparable either from their perceptual appearance or their epistemological recognition (in a biological relationship). But they are still subordinated under the performance of enactment.

While the sensibility replaces parts of the visibility from the second draughtsman who depends on his/her sensory system, the order of the hierarchy becomes irreversible because of the lack of feedback. Hence, the separation between the two bodies eventually formulates a structure of subordination, which reflects the kinetic response in one direction without merely interaction with each other. In other words, this structure of subordination, on one hand, facilitates the bodily engagement, but on the other hand, constrains the second draughtsman's autonomy. For example, if the second draughtsman draws back onto the first draughtsman's back, the whole layering system will collapse in terms of the order of bodily transferability. Therefore, Oppenheim separated the practice into two different stages: *"Returning to a Past State"* and *"Advancing to a Future State."* However, the link between this disruption of the two stages is neither physical or material but metaphorically juxtaposes together within the two TV screens, a tendency toward appropriation in a form of installation. The layering structure is changed because of its irreversible condition of the power relationship. The two stages of images are no longer united, flattened or neutralized as a chain of physical reaction. From this perspective, I would like to interrogate the possibility of utilizing a physical or bodily engagement as a transition to continue seeking a way to realign this layering structure, such as the two different drawing stages.

The very first problem is how to break the subordinative power relationship of this irreversible condition. Since each individual drawing stage has its own temporality and spatiality, the dynamic evolution of the drawing pattern facilitates the filmic process, which is produced in a linear style. The video becomes the final material to represent the drawing practice in two separated segments, which were installed side by side within the TV screens. This filmic process not only replaces their material condition but also restructures their temporality and spatiality in a linear formation. Although, we can simply manipulate the materials (video or film) by breaking its temporality through a technique in film editing, like the non-linear cutting or the montage effect, but this kind of editing technique is mainly embedded in its mechanism without a directly bodily engagement. Although some early experimental cameraless films were produced by creating images directly on celluloid, such as Stan Brakhage, Cécile Fontaine, and Len Lye, the connection between each frame is still barely seen as bodily related. However, these filmic images can be cut into several segments, which reposition the subordinative hierarchy. Hence, a new system has to be formulated which requires an alternative force to re-arrange the order or to open out the contingency. But, within participatory artwork, who has the power or authority? And how is it possible to create a circulated feedback to the draughtsman, or to embody his/her physical relationship within the images? Here, for the embodiment, I would like to propose a strategy by utilizing the projection to formulate a physical condition in order to invite bodily engagement. One of the most significant examples is VALIE EXPORT's experimental work *Auf+Zu+Ab+An (Up+Down+On+Off)* (1968). For the circulated feedback, I would like to introduce Peter Campus's idea of closed-circuit and his famous works *Interface* (1972) and *Three Transitions* (1973). These two sections will be discussed as the major parts for the next two chapters.

Fifth, even though Oppenheim's work is revealing as a filmic documentation of performance, which reproduces the drawings into a production of filmic images, the hand's touch or the tactile reflex from the draughtsman still plays an indispensable role to reflect certain material conditions of the drawing process, which indicates the physical relationship between each screen or surface. From Boris Groys's criticism in his book *Art Power* (2008), his interpretation of Walter Benjamin's concept of aura suggests that modern media, the reproductions, like photograph or film, have the power of deterritorialization: "[t]o reproduce something is to remove it from its site, to deterritorialize it – reproduction transposes the artwork into the network of topologically undermined circulation."³⁴ The possibility of deformation (an altered form), therefore, is embedded inside this circulation. Without the link with their original site-specificity, the filmic images lose their authenticity in the real world. On the other hand, multiple copies of reproduced images also create a self-referential system, which closes out their relation to the external reality. This condition of closure functions like a frame or the boundaries of a painting to separate the inside and outside, what is the content of the image and what is not.

For Oppenheim's work, what is important here is the visual appearance of the body image, which performs the hand's touch, the tactile reflex, and pulls the artificial filmic image of the drawings back to its bodily physicality, even though only on the level of signifier (i.e. the film image as a filmic signifier in this case). The two drawings are still physically related through the draughtsmen's bodily performances. The visualized gesture of touch inscribes the bodily movement onto the drawings in a ritual manner, which partially prolongs, extends, or expands the image's painterly condition without confining its materiality. This strategy of performative drawing thematizes the pictorial transmission as a new form of painterly condition. However,

³⁴ Groys, B. (2008) *Art power*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. p. 62.

if it is necessary to compare the filmic image with any painterly characteristic, then one of the significant differentiations follows from Horace's argument about *Ut pictura poesis* – both painting or poem can be scrutinized closely from different perspective and also be viewed from a broader distance as a whole or a configurative image. Other media (like film) require a certain distance to be viewed as a whole or a configurative image.³⁵ The detail of the filmic image can merely manifest its origin but most likely refers to its physical quality, in terms of clarity, size, or illumination. Walter Ruttmann made it clear that "you can't turn a film into a work of art by augmenting it and exalting it with 'quality.'"³⁶ Maybe it is arguable that some art works promote the visual stimulation through their crystal quality, like Bill Viola's *Passions Project*, which assimilates the high-resolution of filmic images to lifelike, vivid emotion in super slow motion. Although, the incredible details of shift give the viewer an undeniable fascination and the possibility to look closely from every different perspective, Viola explains further that he was more interested in the dynamic transitions from one emotion to the next than in a dramatic portrayal of the emotions per se.³⁷ Without any changing quality from each drawing, Oppenheim's filmic images seem to require farther distance to be seen as an event like documentation but the filmic images of the drawings are still comparable because of the discrepancy from their bodily engagement and their subordinated hierarchy. Since each separated drawing stage cannot receive any direct feedback from each other because of their irreversible hierarchy, it is impossible to build up any physical relationship with each TV screen. Therefore, the two stages are actually two separated drawing practices, in terms of their independent layering system. This

³⁵ Bull, M., (2000) *Ut pictura poesis*. [Lat.: 'as is painting so is poetry']. Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. 25 Sep. 2012 <<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T087455>>.

³⁶ Elder, B. (R. Bruce), (2008) *Harmony + dissent: film and avant-garde art movements in the early twentieth century*. [Waterloo, Ont.]: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. p. 117.

³⁷ Noland, C., (2009) *Agency and embodiment: performing gestures/producing culture*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. p. 69.

condition of separation makes the patterns of the drawings from the two stages become incomparable fragments, in terms of the inner duration of the moving images. The two stages are realigned only through their topological strategy of subject manner and also their external objecthood as an installation. If we take Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing* as a new painterly model of drawing process in order to overcome the constrain of materiality, the question would be is there any possibility to rebuild their physical relationship in order to set the images of the drawings back to their painterly condition as a recognizable layering system? A very simple straightforward way is to touch the screen directly from the external reality. The similar exploration in this playful set up could be historically tracked way back to Edwin Porter's *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902), where the Uncle Josh jumps onto the stage and touches the projection of film in order to flirt with the illusion of the actress. Or, Rene Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924), "where a man in slow motion jumps through the film screen and tears the word FIN."³⁸ Or also Jean-Luc Godard's film *Les Carabiniers* (1963), where in a scene set in a cinema, the actor (Michel-Ange) tries to climb on the stage and touch the screen as it is showing an image of a lady in the film-within-the-film. The reduplication of images creates an effect of "mise en abyme,"³⁹ with the image nested within an image. The film has being created within the film repositioned through its mise-en-scène to the real film being made. Then, the final production is projected again onto the screen, which reflects the narrative of the film in contrast with its cinematic setting of immersiveness. This effect of *mise en abyme* is "explicitly promoting a form of spectatorship where the spectator watches, reacts to, and interacts with a moving picture."⁴⁰ However, these actors in

³⁸ Huhtamo, E., Parikka, J.... (2011) *Media archaeology: approaches, applications, and implications*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. p. 158.

³⁹ Mortenbock, P., Mooshammer, H... (2011) *Space (re)solutions: intervention and research in visual culture*. Bielefeld: Transcript. p. 62.

⁴⁰ Huhtamo said: "Indeed, the institutionalization of the cinema gradually got rid of all the features that determined the (potential) interactive dispositive of early cinema". Huhtamo, E., Parikka, J (2011)

the film are actually touching the surface of the screen but hardly create or manipulate any qualitative changes of the projection or the filmic images, which are embedded inside the apparatus, like the celluloid. The actors seem to only have the ability to metaphorically interact with the film and change the material condition of the screen instead of the merely immaterial condition of the projection or the filmic image. However, in contrast with the TV screen, the light from the projector opens a spatial field for the actor or any participant to create a physical engagement. This opens out the possibility to relate the durational fragments back to the external reality (for example, the real space of the gallery or cinema) and to re-order them in a non-hierarchical manner. The layers of filmic images are no longer purified, unified or flattened as a whole, like a final reproduction, but move toward the non-linear montage in a physical reality which allows any performative engagement and keeps evolving in time, which as Boris Groys has said, “becomes a life form,”⁴¹ full of contingency, in a biopolitical sense. This will raise the question whether the power of the layering structure is no longer dependent on its subordinated hierarchy. And who has the authority to realign or manipulate the layers of images. Or, can we recognize that the fragments of the filmic images are no longer bonded with a linear structure but rather expanded into temporal layers or spatialized durations, in which each layer preserves its own exclusive temporal and spatial dimension that can be re-engaged by further physical or bodily manipulation? In order to interrogate these questions, I would like to introduce VALIE EXPORT’s work: *Auf+Zu+Ab+An (Up+Down+On+Off)* (1968).

p. 157.

⁴¹ Groys, B. (2008) *Art power*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. p. 54.

Valie Export: *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)*

Embodiment: Performative Body as Transition

Around 1960s and 70s, artists, like Valie Export, Vito Acconci, Joan Jonas, Dennis Oppenheim and Dan Graham started to re-engage the filmic media by seeing the human body as material to re-examine the possibility to challenge the viewer's perception and consciousness. Under a tendency towards a dialogue with painterly formulation, some of their works perform a major innovation in breaking down the barriers between video/film and painting. Despite the questionable tendency which emphasizes on the conceptual (verbal) approaches, I would like to re-investigate some of their works in order to clarify how these artists utilize the video or filmic projection to make it possible to embody the pictorial transformation through the physical engagement. Firstly, I would like to take VALIE EXPORT's unique work: *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)* (1968) as an example to interrogate the distinction between screen and canvas, and how the projection realigns the pictorial image with the filmic image through embodiment.⁴² (see Fig. 14)

Fig. 14: VALIE EXPORT (1968)
Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off).

Film action, active screen, film as
determined reflex.

Medium: N-8mm, 3 min. (no loop)
Dimension variable



⁴² Mueller, R., (1994) Valie Export: fragments of the imagination. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 239.

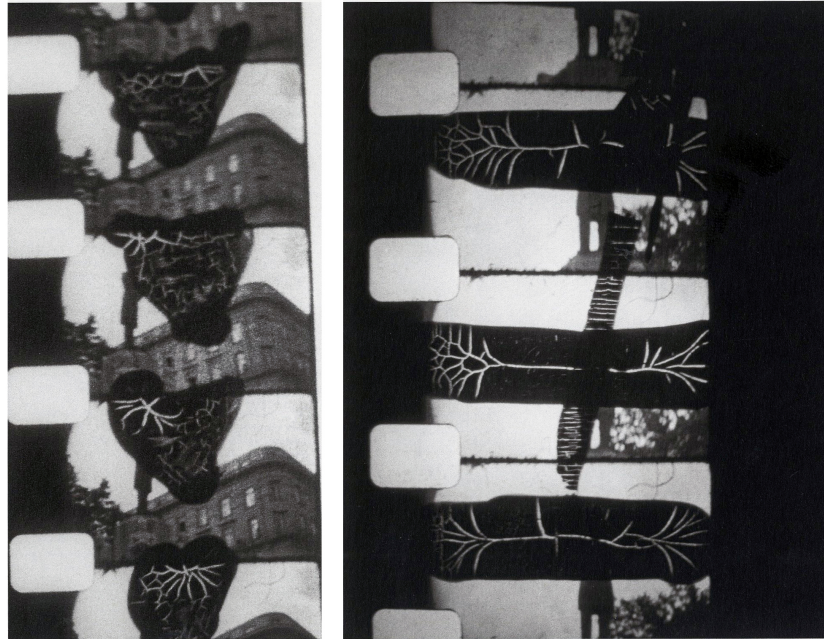


Fig. 15: VALIE EXPORT (1968) *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)*.
N-8mm celluloid in black-and-white and color (Pattern Film)

In the realm of "Expanded Cinema," or what some commentators have called "film action," "active screen," or even "film as determined reflex", EXPORT's *Auf+Ab+An+Zu* is a spectacle, event and performance, which was first shown at Occam Studio, München in 1968. Deriving from the phenomenon of technological innovation in 60s and 70s, the Austrian artist, VALIE EXPORT⁴³ was continuing the bodily exploration by introducing a new condition of drawing process, which combines the filmic projection and live performance. After (originally) painting over N-8mm celluloid in black-and-white and color, VALIE EXPORT projected the "pattern film"⁴⁴ onto the drawing paper (see Fig. 15), which functioned like the projection screen. Playing around the role of painter, director and audience, EXPORT situates a new form of participation in between planning (teaching film) and spontaneity (live performance), which reflected the

⁴³ 1967 invention of her artist name VALIE EXPORT: an artistic concept and logo to be written in capital letters only. <http://www.valieexport.at/en/biografie/>.

⁴⁴ A.L. Rees ... [et al.]. (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 291.

movement of Happenings and Action Painting at that time.⁴⁵ In a self-conscious manner, the audiences were invited to draw directly onto the paper screen. The participant's performative bodily engagement is reprinted onto the paper screen through the chain reaction between the visual response, the physical contact and the interaction with the projected image's materiality. Without specific instruction, the audiences are invited to participate the drawing process with the projection at the same time. The participants are provided a set of "drawing utensils"⁴⁶ in order to interact with "the portions of the projected image"⁴⁷ and also its fluctuation of the visuality. While the painted film creates moving shadow and light onto the drawing paper, the participants reconfigure the projected image with the tangible drawing directly onto the screen. Within three minutes duration of the film, the event of the painting practice reproduced a new reproduction of the unique film, which VALIE EXPORT sees as a "lehrfilm"⁴⁸ (learning film) in reference to Brecht's "Lehrstück"⁴⁹ (learning play). The condition of this active interaction corresponds to Tom Gunning's concept of "attraction"⁵⁰ and Wanda Strauven's suggestion in *The Observer's Dilemma: To Touch or Not to Touch* (2011), a tendency toward the player mode of an interactive game.⁵¹ While the participants gain the privilege to make the physical touches and imprint their bodies onto the paper screen, the temporal continuity of live performance becomes crucial in allowing them to be materialized and play the central role of (re-)presentation. EXPORT described

⁴⁵ EXPORT, V., (1989) *Aspect of Feminist Actionism*. New German Critique, No. 47 (Spring – Summer). p. 80.

⁴⁶ A.L. Rees ... [et al.]. (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 291.

⁴⁷ A.L. Rees ... [et al.]. (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 291.

⁴⁸ Mueller, R., (1994) *Valie Export: fragments of the imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 11.

⁴⁹ Mueller, R., (1994) *Valie Export: fragments of the imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 11.

⁵⁰ Stam, R., and Miller, T., (2000) *Film and theory: an anthology*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell. p. 233.

⁵¹ Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka.. (2011) *Media archaeology: approaches, applications, and implications*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. pp. 149-163.

this condition of temporality as a new sense of time: “Instead of technical reproduction into infinity and through celluloid, there was a shift in production to a new sense of time”⁵² But what kind of a new sense of time in what kind of dimension?

Space is conceptualized as an instance in time. The liberated observer, who must take part in the reproduction of the film, adds to what has been painted onto the celluloid with his/her drawing pencil. The simultaneity of projection and montage that is accomplished on the screen rather than on the celluloid shows that montage is drawing.⁵³ (Export 1994)

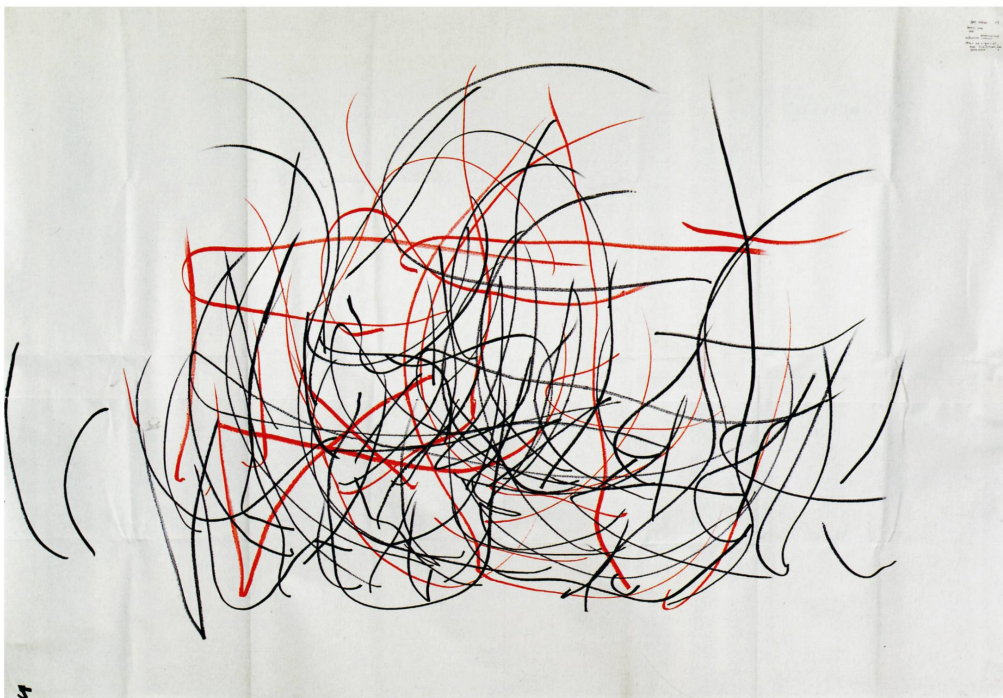


Fig. 16: VALIE EXPORT (1968) *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)*.
The final reproduced reproduction of drawing (paper screen).

⁵² A.L. Rees ... [et al.]. (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 291.

⁵³ Mueller, R., (1994) *Valie Export: fragments of the imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 239.

The stress on the “synchronization of the senses,”⁵⁴ but not like Peter Wollen set in symbolic level of language, has pushed the concept of montage into bodily transition which reflects the fundamental condition of a drawing or a painting. The temporal dimension is not only extended into linear continuity but also accumulated by the layers of synchronization onto the screen. VALIE EXPORT took Peter Weibel’s theoretical statement to exemplify the transition between the object and representation (projected image).⁵⁵ The “identificatory transfer”⁵⁶ is no longer exclusive to the tangible material in an irreversible direction, like a traditional painting, but the “immediacy”⁵⁷ of fluctuating exchange between materiality and immateriality, presentation and representation, subject and object, embodiment and mechanization, visibility and invisibility, production and reproduction, so on and so forth. Therefore, the filmic image has been expanded into the external reality not only physically but also conceptually. The participant’s body is positioned right between the surface of the projection and the surface of the screen, which constitutes the physical kinetic relationship. Beyond the layers of celluloid, the projection itself opens a spatial field for the bodily engagement, which is able to re-manipulate the image with directly contact. Therefore, the editing of the filmic image can become physicalized again after its production as celluloid (or pixilated video). As a result, the materiality of the projection plays a critical role for the participant in

⁵⁴ Antoine-D., J., with Quigley, P., (2004) *The Montage principle: Eisenstein in new culture and critical contexts*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. p. 47.

⁵⁵ “The ontological difference between the representation and the object becomes the point of departure and at the same time the identificatory transfer occurs again: the reflection and the object overlap one another in a newly arranged process – oriented presentation of the filmic media.” Peter Weibel in Rees, A.L. et al (eds.) (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 293.

⁵⁶ Rees, A.L., ... [et al.] (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 293.

⁵⁷ In a performance in Vienna in 1967 in which he projected a film onto his own body, Peter Weibel said: “Technical reproducibility is replaced by immediacy, and with this the objective character of the film is transcended ... The “world” is no longer simulated; rather, the possibility of producing “world” is demonstrated. EXPORT, V., (2003) *Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality*. Peter Tscherkassky & the Austrian Avant-Garde. Issue 28. [http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/28/expanded_cinema/] accessed 17 Dec. 2012.

terms of quality exchange. This perspective is slightly different than EXPORT's observation that "[e]diting in film is the equivalent of painting; metric film editing that tries to capture time as music is an echo of painting"⁵⁸, since the material quality still plays a critical role for the filmic projection.

The identifiable characteristic of a painter or a drawer is substituted by the nameless participators, which formulated a form of public engagement. This change of authorship emancipates both the audience and the artist from the conventional hierarchical order. The goal of stylish formulation has been discarded and turns into emphasizing its visual heterogeneity. The visible body functions like the recognizable semi-object, which defines the sense of location, dimension, size, distance and etc. Export described in *Split: reality: Valie Export* that

The viewer, whose participation in the production of the film is essential, uses the writing implement to add to what is covered on the celluloid. In the end, what you see in the white projected square are the lines and symbols of the reproduced reproduction. (Export 1968)

What is left is a piece of paper with random drawing lines or patterns. (see Fig.16) However, can we still see it as a complete work of drawing or painting? Since VALIE EXPORT considers this work as a unique film instead of a new formulation of drawing or painting, should we see this final production as one part of the documentation or one part of the installation? Once before EXPORT insisted on signing on the drawing paper by herself in the end to claim her authority as the artist who conducts the

⁵⁸ Rees, A.L., ... [et al.] (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 293.

unique film,⁵⁹ but somehow gave it away. Apparently, this becomes problematic for us to see the production as a piece of drawing or painting but less troubles to define it as an expanded film. This paradoxical presumption actually points out the inadequate condition of the practice as a drawing or as a painting. However, how can we fulfill its requirement by resetting up the work? In order to clarify this question, I believe it is essential to re-analyse the difference between screen and canvas.

Screen vs. Canvas

The main thing wrong with painting is that it is a rectangular plane placed flat against the wall. A rectangle is a shape itself; it is obviously the whole shape; it determines and limits the arrangement of whatever is on or inside of it. [...] The elements inside the rectangle are broad and simple and correspond closely to the rectangle. The shapes and surface are only those, which can occur plausibly within and on a rectangular plane. The parts are few and so subordinate to the unity as not to be parts in an ordinary sense. (Judd 1965)⁶⁰

First, from Donald Judd's perspective, a canvas is, traditionally, "a rectangular plane placed flat against the wall"⁶¹ which is similar to a screen. Despite the changeable shape of the canvas or the distortable perspective of the screen, the spatial order is fixed in a sense of conventional arrangement. Of course, there are

⁵⁹ White, I., (2007) *Art Review: Issue 10*, April. p. 121.

⁶⁰ Kellein, T., (2002) *Donald Judd: Early Work, 1955-1968*. New York: D.A.P., 2002. Originally published in *Arts Yearbook 8*, 1965. pp.1-2.

⁶¹ Kellein, T., (2002) *Donald Judd: Early Work, 1955-1968*. New York: D.A.P., 2002. Originally published in *Arts Yearbook 8*, 1965. p.1.

some art works trying to challenge this concept, like James Turrell's *Ganzfeld Apani* (2011) (see Fig.17) in which the whole physical space becomes the screen, but, here, I would like to emphasize the canvas's ideological hierarchy in order to compare it with the screen.

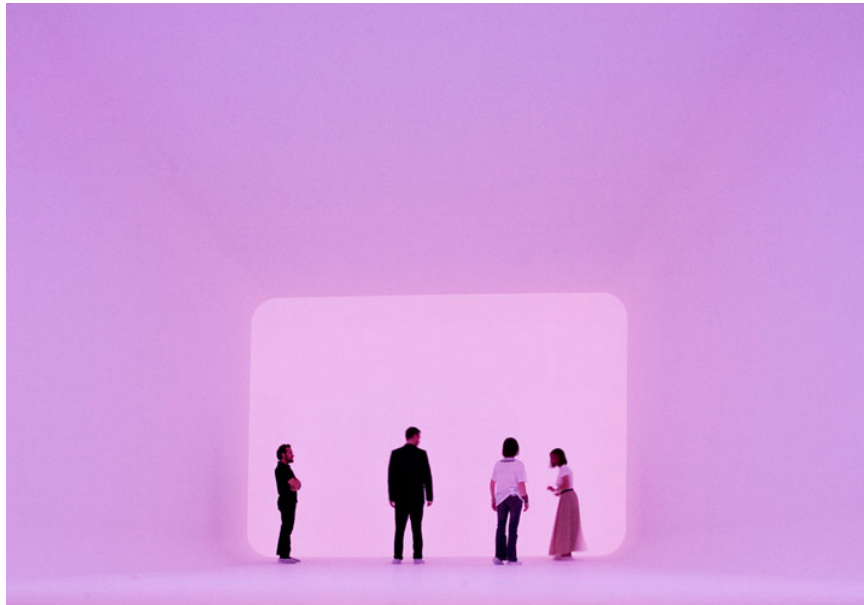


Fig. 17: James Turrell (2011) *Ganzfeld Apani*. Venice: 54th VENICE BIENNALE.



Fig. 18: VALIE EXPORT (1968) *Auf+Ab+An+Zu (Up+Down+On+Off)*.
Documentation of drawing process, Projection area approx. 150x200 cm
Collected by Generali Foundation

Any paint or “whatever is on or inside of it”⁶²(Judd 2002) will be recognized as the parts, which are “subordinated”⁶³ to the whole. Regardless of the shape or the boundary of the canvas (or any painting surface), the very first paint on the surface actually changes the ontology of the canvas as the new surface of the painting for the next paint. There is no more pure canvas but only an ideal of the canvas in our presumption that it was a blank canvas before. After the first paint or mark on the canvas (or any plane surface), the painter or the artist hypostatizes the idea of canvas but, paradoxically, is no longer dealing with the originality (or the pure form) of the canvas at the same time. The accumulation of the paints or marks are related and arranged within the painting itself as a possible end. Depending on Judd’s analysis, a painting as “nearly an entity, one thing, and not the indefinable sum of a group of entities and references,”⁶⁴ dismantles or ignores the surface of the canvas’s pre-occupied role and automatically absorbs the canvas as one part of the painting, either from conceptual or material level. However, by contrast, the screen stands in a more independent position. Since whatever is on or inside of the screen will be recognized as parts of the screen instead of becoming parts of the genetic content of the film or video. At least, it will be recognized as the other external apparatus. This is because a screen is the last transitive layer of the image, which defines the final visuality of the filmic image. Therefore, the screen is replaceable and images can be added onto it. However, a canvas is the prior layer of the pictorial image, the very first mode of the image’s configuration or limitation, and the non-reducible flatness. Because of its material condition, the accumulation of the paints makes the canvas become the indivisible component, the very first layer of

⁶² Kellein, T., (2002) *Donald Judd: Early Work, 1955-1968*. New York: D.A.P., 2002. Originally published in *Arts Yearbook* 8, 1965. p.1.

⁶³ “The parts are few and so subordinate to the unity as not to be parts in an ordinary sense.” K., T., (2002) pp.1-2.

⁶⁴ Kellein, T., (2002) *Donald Judd: Early Work, 1955-1968*. New York: D.A.P., 2002. Originally published in *Arts Yearbook* 8, 1965. p.2.

the strata.

From this point of view, the function of a canvas and a screen seems to be irreconcilable. This makes it clear why Valie Export's work *Auf+Ab+An+Zu* (*Up+Down+On+Off*) (1968) could generally be recognized only as a unique film allied with an exercise in drawing process instead of a unique drawing because the activity (with the participants' engagement) of drawing process cannot be eventually accumulated, integrated or confused with the projected filmic images on the screen fully, or changes the ontology of the screen into a canvas. The screen is still a screen, which cannot generate an image like a canvas out of its material condition, in the way that a modernist canvas converts itself into an image on the basis of its concrete physical condition. The whole performative engagement with the projected image, which constitutes the spirit of the work, could not be (re-)presented fully onto the screen. Hence, how can it be possible to turn a screen into a canvas, or what kind of operation is able to fulfill the function of a canvas as a screen, vice versa? Stephen Dwoskin gave us a possible answer that: "If we can understand how painters, after 'Action Painting', needed to move the action beyond the canvas, then we can also understand the urge of film-makers to move the frame beyond the screen."⁶⁵ Before questioning what kind of consciousness has been emphasized on the Export's work *Auf+Ab+An+Zu*, I would like to focus on the part, which is beyond the screen and its relation with the screen.

While a painter utilizes the surface of the canvas to load the pigments in order to transubstantiate the imprint of the body and (re-)present the resemblance of the flattened image simultaneously through its medium's materiality, a film maker uses

⁶⁵ Dwoskin, S., (1975) *Film is ...The international free cinema*. London: Owen. p.240.

the celluloid (or digital sensor) inside the camera (the recording device) to record and frame the reality in order to use the projector to reconfigure the image onto the screen. Apparently, under this theatrical condition, the screen only takes the part of the role of making flesh of the image but the celluloid controls the critical role of resemblance, in which its power comes from the camera's prefiguration. Whatever the lens can see, or whatever can be seen through the materiality of the light will be imprinted and flattened onto the celluloid as a systematic (re-)production of its visuality. Export, overcomes this conventional manipulation by directly drawing and making marks on the celluloid, like Picasso scraping on the photo slide, to imprint their bodies directly onto its carrier. As a result, when Export's participators are cooperating with the filmic image on the screen, they are actually making the drawing with EXPORT's imprint of the body indirectly. The celluloid functions like the invisible canvas to transform the imprint of the artist's body. The projected light which is produced from the projector is functioning like the *copula* to "[make] of identity in relation" and "bring together the real world and the world of theory; or in other terms, the conjunction of being and the sign."⁶⁶(Ferrell 2006). Nevertheless, where should the power of resembling reside in this condition of illumination? Could it be the celluloid, the screen, the content of the film, the materiality of the projection, or the performative body inside the projection?

Even though, as in the examples described in this text, it seems to be possible to arrange a reflexive setup where cameras record the interaction between bodies, screen, projections and other cameras in space and time, it is obvious that the

⁶⁶ "... copula expresses the *making of identity in relation*. The copula names the process of distinction, and names of it as generative, as well as hinting at a sexual origin. It generates the conjunction of the sexual and the logical, in one concept; a figure that can bring together the real world and the world of theory; or, in other term, the conjunction of being and the sign." Ferrell, R., (2006) *Copula: sexual technologies, reproductive powers*. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 109.

screen cannot represent, document or transmit the performative body without altering its fixed condition in space and time. Therefore, the whole operation remains in a theatrical condition of performance, like Happenings. The work is constructed basically on improvisatory continuity, a synthesis of contingency and linearity, which requires active participants. With the linked reaction between the perceptual eye, conscious mind and sensible hand, the participant is performing the active interaction between the material and immaterial sources of image and most likely is acting intuitively. The participant's contemplative consciousness remains in the sense of the external apparatus instead of the complex content of the pictorial images. As a result, the fluency and instantaneity of the process is emphasized. The participant is invited to interact intuitively with the work but he/she is suppressed by the limitation of live time and the authorized hierarchy in which the physical condition structures the rules for the interaction. As Wanda Strauven suggests, this indicates a tendency toward the player mode of an interactive game.⁶⁷ The excitement (or sensation) is generated from the status of the improvisation and unpredictability among the participators' interaction with the apparatus and with each other. This socialized contingency performs as the main subject matter while the content of the pictorial image becomes its by-product, which is to say subordinating to the performance. Hence, is there any way to break the linear temporality, which leads to performative improvisation or cinematic narrative depending on the sequence of images, and turn the work back towards a painterly quality in terms of its visuality? Or, is it possible to expand the work's duration into a non-linear dimension in the sense of non-spatial accumulation, overlapping or superimposition but still produce a bodily engagement in relationship to the layers of pictorial images?

⁶⁷ Wanda Strauven in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds.), (2011) *Media archaeology: approaches, applications, and implications*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. pp. 149-163.

Apparently, the light from the projection is the only interface to reconnect or bridge these two separated media, the material painting and the immaterial content of the film, and make their appearance or reflection in a visual form. In this work by EXPORT, the gazes of the non-participating viewers function like cameras in the sense that they can survey the whole arrangement of the performance. Therefore, is there any other way to arrest this tactile visibility in order to return this perfect gaze back to the artist in real or delayed time? Very ironically, a camera seems to be the perfect instrument to (re-)perform this possibility. But how to position the camera in order to recreate the performative operation's visibility and also hinge together the body and the apparatus? I believe one of the possible strategies is what Peter Campus calls the closed-circuit.

Peter Campus:

Closed-circuit:

Closed-circuit describes a live transmission of audio visual signals resembling the method facilitated by radio and television: the direct closed-circuit connection between apparatus for recording and broadcasting (loudspeaker or monitor/projector) arises by means of auditory or visual feedback, which is, in turn, the basis for an amplification of the signal. (Kacunko 2003)⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Campus, P., (2003) Analog + digital video + foto 1970-2003: Kunsthalle Bremen 13. September bis 9. November 2003 / Peter Campus ; herausgegeben von Wulf Herzogenrath und Barbara Nierhoff. Köln: Distribution in Europe, Buchhandlung Walther König. p. 84.

In the 1970s, analogical video, in contrast to cinematic production of film, played a vital role in allowing artists, like Skip Sweeney, Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman, to exploit and interrogate its apparatus as a more transitive medium rather than a supplementary instrument of representation in narratives. One of the most active strategies for setting up an interactive configuration is the closed-circuit. By utilizing the video camera looking at its own monitor, closed-circuit can produce “a dynamic flow of imagery”⁶⁹, a live feedback loop, which formulates a double or multiple receding vision, like a mirror effect (reverse live image). The process of re-transmission of its own signal opens out a possible engagement from the external reality. The result of its visual production is always unstable and evolving. Beyond being categorized as a part of the expanded apparatus, closed-circuit generates its own automatism, which Skip Sweeney, one of the precursors, recognized as a new power of “religion – a wave to ride.”⁷⁰ This idea of signal circulation has been oriented toward many different territories by artists from 60’s and 70’s.

One of the representative approaches is exploring the capacity for the displacement of environments. By manipulating the location of the camera and the screen, for example using closed-circuit television, the video is able to expand its field into the physical reality, like the architectural space. Works, as in installations by Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman, create a site-specific condition, which emphasizes spatial dislocation. The live or delayed feedback of the displaced image challenges the spectatorship where the viewer is no longer passively absorbed into the cinematic illusion but is aware of his/her surrounding space. On one hand, these works successfully open out the possibility of interactive engagement playing with

⁶⁹ Woody Vasulka describes the Video feedback is “a dynamic flow of imagery created by the camera looking at its own monitor.” Shilimmer, M., (1992) *Video Feedback with Audio Input Modulation and CVI Data Camera*. Pioneers of Electronic Art [Ars Electronic]. p. 148.

⁷⁰ Shilimmer, M., (1992) *Video Feedback with Audio Input Modulation and CVI Data Camera*. Pioneers of Electronic Art [Ars Electronic]. p. 148.

not only the space but also both the video timeline and physical temporality. However, on the other hand, the artists start to fetishize and worship the effect of closed-circuit as a new experience of artistic engagement, which draws the viewer's attention to the mechanism of its setup in relation to the space. The participant's bodily engagement is built upon a relationship with the architectural space rather than the direct relationship with the live feedback image. Without the confinement of the sculptural space, which builds out the spatial relationship with the viewer's perspective, the work will become meaningless. This derivation promotes the live feedback loop as a spatial effect, which is tied to the architectural (or site specific) examination in relation to the position of the camera. This trajectory drives away the broader potential for developing or challenging its own mechanism in the sense of the bodily engagement or manipulation in relation to the dynamic flow of imagery, which is associated with a more complex idea of dislocation. For instance, screen itself can be the key factor to relocate the live feedback image's spatial and temporal dimension, in which the image is able to dissociate with the architectural space.

While the possibility of recognizing a monitor as an object is supported by its physicality, as a television set is doomed to become a part of the furniture⁷¹, projection offers a much more flexible position. Projection can isolate points in space and can therefore sculpturalize a condition of spatiality, which is generated by what Roland Barthes called the "visible and unperceived" ⁷² light beam in "a veritable cinematographic cocoon."⁷³ Instead of emphasizing this unperceived solidity, like Anthony McCall's projected work *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), which utilizes the hazer to visualize the projection's sculptural form, the closed-circuit-plus-projection

⁷¹ Campus, P., (2003) *Analog + digital video + foto 1970-2003*: Kunsthalle Bremen 13. September bis 9. November 2003 / Peter Campus ; herausgegeben von Wulf Herzogenrath und Barbara Nierhoff. Köln: Distribution in Europe, Buchhandlung Walther König. p. 82.

⁷² Barthes, R., (1986) *The rustle of language*. translated by Richard Howard. Oxford: Blackwell. p. 347.

⁷³ Barthes, R., (1986) *The rustle of language*. translated by Richard Howard. Oxford: Blackwell. p. 346.

setup directs the spectator's attention back to the screen and its illusion of the projected images, as in Peter Campus's *Interface* (1972), which creates an unfamiliar interaction between the participants and their reflective doubles, the mirror effect.



Fig. 19: Peter Campus (1972) *Interface*.
Installation - closed circuit video camera,
1 light projector, 1 projector, 1 glass
Collection: Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (France)

The work *Interface* was first shown in the exhibition *Projekt 74* in the Kolnischen Kunstverein during 1974, as one of the most significant examples of interactive closed-circuit video installations. Behind a piece of glass, which is located towards the bottom of a dimly lit room, a closed-circuit video camera is set up. On the other side of the glass, there is a video projector, which is projecting the live video signal directly from the recording camera onto the sheet of the glass. When the visitor enters the recording area in front of the transparent glass, his/her mirror reflection (the right way around) and his/her video image (the wrong way around) appear on the screen (the glass) simultaneously and life-sized. (see Fig.19).

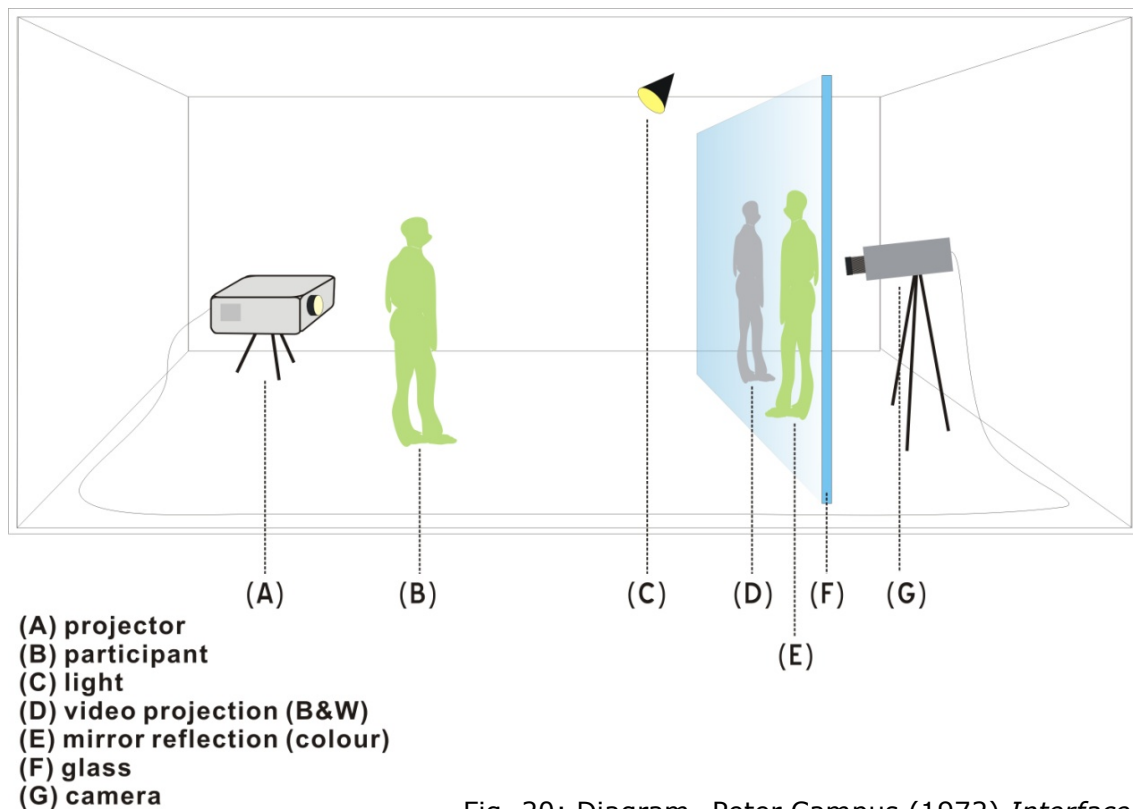


Fig. 20: Diagram- Peter Campus (1972) *Interface*.

At the viewer's disposal, the two images are visible either next to each other or partially overlapping.⁷⁴ In this perspective, the participant has been turned into a vital element of the work that secures the visual interaction. Without the visible alter-bodies from the participants, the work will remain inadequate. The glass operates as an interface on which the heterogeneous altered form of the viewers' bodies are fused as the reversed black-and-white video image and their vivid real time reflection in colour. The viewer wanders around the interaction and differentiation between the physical and the virtual self. It seems to be reasonable that the video image appears in a more fragile (low contrast) condition as a ghost-like (black-and-white) alter role. With the kinaesthetic movement in real time, the images are neither accumulated as tangible material, which follow the real time sequence, nor superimposed as cinematic montage, which would neglect the

⁷⁴ Campus, P., (2003) *Analog + digital video + foto 1970-2003*: Kunsthalle Bremen 13. September bis 9. November 2003 / Peter Campus ; herausgegeben von Wulf Herzogenrath und Barbara Nierhoff. Köln: Distribution in Europe, Buchhandlung Walther König. pp. 84-87.

physical presence of the viewer, but rather a bizarre condition of juxtaposition in between the virtual and the real. Everything is connected kinetically and set relative to each other. The whole space-time in action is folded onto a piece of glass, which plays the role of an invisible screen by containing the images and creating the false depth of the field. As the participant moves randomly in front of the glass, the change of his/her position from the alter self promotes an intimate but unfamiliar social dialogue, like holding his/her own hands or overlapping with his/her own body images or even other participant's body (see Fig.20). This paradoxical relationship of alienation deconstructs the linear and successive condition of the video image and also formulates a new layering system of superimposition, which embodies the physical engagement of the participant.

The instantaneous engagement with the alter selves draws the viewer's attention and curiosity to identify a schizoid-like situation of multiple alter selves. Even though, in this strategy, the metaphorical contact between the double illusions are apparently bodily related, (as the participant tries to hold his own hands from his alter bodies. as in fig.21), they are merely tangible contacts between the mirror image and the projected image, which are not traced or marked, unlike a drawing or a painting. For this matter, the participants are not directly engaging the physical body of the projection, or more precisely the materiality of the screen, unlike VALIE EXPORT's *Auf+Ab+An+Zu* (1968), in which the participants are able to leave marks on the screen. Instead they are invited to perform with their ghost-like alter body ephemerally. The camera functions as a fixed, passive, and inhuman instrument to connect the visible bodies with real space in an immaterial condition. Each alter-image of a participant's body performs like a separated layer on the screen or as the title indicates: the interface.



Fig. 21: Peter Campus (1972) *Interface*.

Photo: courtesy of the artist and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York.

The closed-circuit juxtaposes the multiple layers of images and synchronizes their temporality, which changes the linear nature of the video image toward a more spatial dimension in terms of an assemblage of the layering sequence. The synthesis of the body images on screen is derived from the participant's body simultaneously. In contrast to the cinematic montage effect, which is recognized as "an image separated from movement, or of a movement-image separated from itself"⁷⁵ from Francois Zourabichvili's point of view, the layers (interfaces) of images from participants' body images are always self-reflexive and bodily related through movement in time. The mechanism of the moving-images is subordinated to the action of bodily movement from the participants since the body can respond to the image directly and is dissociated from the cinematic apparatus, like the fixed camera

⁷⁵ Flaxman, G., (2000) *The brain is the screen: Deleuze and the philosophy of cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. p. 144.

without any hand movement. From the perceptual level, the discrepancy between each layer of image is a metamorphosis of the origin, from the participant's physical body. Thus, in this respect, the participant's multiple altered bodies not only stand in a dominant position to control the subject matter of the image but also function as a signal to reflect each physical layer or the physical condition of the glass. For instance, the viewer or the participant can recognize the colour reflection as an inverted one by the comparable appearance and the movement of the bodies in real time without seeing or realizing its mechanical setup. Also, from the discrepancy of the scale, the viewer or participant can realize the spatial distance from the projection. This function of the double agencies of live feedback body image offers a possibility to substitute the direct physical touches or engagement with each layer in order to overcome the lack of materiality or the transformation of the physicality in terms of the light of the projection and the screen. This assumption can be expanded to think about Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing* (1971), which I discussed in the previous chapter. Campus's idea of closed-circuit seems to be a perfect solution for Oppenheim to realign the two different stages of drawing, which originally represented through two separated TV screens and lack of bodily connection. If Oppenheim utilizes the live feedback strategy to create a close-circuit condition, then the two stages of drawings are no longer constrained by their subordinate hierarchy or irreversible temporality and are able to be repositioned onto the same surface (the screen) in order to provide the possibility of bodily re-engagement. Even though the layers of the drawings can be layered through the re-projected process, the bodily engagement remains metaphorical. Apparently the only tangible thing which the draughtsman can physically touch or which can be touched, is the tangible screen and the projected light beam, not the original physical component of the drawing, like the pigments. Therefore, a question to be asked here is – without direct

physical touch – how can the draughtsman still be able to manipulate the subject matter of the image, like a traditional drawing through the possibility of bodily engagement?



Fig. 22: Peter Campus (1973) *Three Transitions*. (excerpt)
Video (color, sound), Duration: 4:53 min

***Three Transitions* –the multiple frontality**

Unlike *Interface*, which opens out the possibility for the bodily interaction for public, Campus's *Three Transitions* (1973) (see Fig.22) demonstrates a more radical concept of superimposing self-portraits, which challenges or problematizes the viewer's perception in relation to the medium's artificial configuration. The word transition, as in the title, indicates the emphasis upon the fundamental change of resemblance and its evolving motifs, which provokes a deeper insight about the medium's ontology. While working as Artist-in-Residence at WGBH-TV in Boston in 1973, Peter Campus produced a series of video works, including *Three Transitions*.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *Three Transitions* (1973), which belongs to Pamela and Richard Kranlich, is the first of Campus'

By using chroma-keying effect (the blue-screen technique), Campus conducts the second and third transition in a deconstructive way. For the second transition, his face is erased by magically using his own hand to reveal another self, the same nose, chin, lips, forehead, which is hidden underneath the original image. The self-portrait is gradually ripping off and replaced by his clone. The uncanny moment of reflexive circulation is amplified by the failure to destroy the realistic and identical self. The inability of projecting the imaginary desire creates a paradoxical condition of narcissistic tragedy, as Tiresias (seer) prophesied: “Narcissus would live until he saw himself.”⁷⁷ The viewer is forced to confront this anti-imagination and be aware of the conflict between the medium’s manipulative capacity and its power of perceptual domination, which corresponds to Campus’s description: “[i]t is easy to utilize video to clarify perceptual situations because it separates the eye surrogate from the eye-brain experience we are all too familiar with.”⁷⁸ This experimental exploration of the discrepancy between perception and conscious awareness challenges a new order of recognition, in which the medium creates subjective “superficial-images”⁷⁹ - a self-reference system.

By following the third transition, Campus’s live image is superimposed on a mirror paper, which is also held by his off-camera hand. The burning flame appears to annihilate both the mirror paper and his living features in a duration of time. Here, the natural power of fire causes not only physical damage but also symbolizes a virtual deletion. Apparently, the chroma-keying effect exaggerates the fire’s ability as

works to be produced at WGBH-TV in Boston. C., P., (2003), p. 36.

⁷⁷ Lowen, A., (2004) *Narcissim: denial of the true self*. London: Simon & Schuster. p. 26.

⁷⁸ Campus, P., (2003) *Analog + digital video + foto 1970-2003*: Kunsthalle Bremen 13. September bis 9. November 2003 / Peter Campus ; herausgegeben von Wulf Herzogenrath und Barbara Nierhoff. Köln: Distribution in Europe, Buchhandlung Walther König. p. 82.

⁷⁹ Campus, P., (2003) *Analog + digital video + foto 1970-2003*: Kunsthalle Bremen 13. September bis 9. November 2003 / Peter Campus ; herausgegeben von Wulf Herzogenrath und Barbara Nierhoff. Köln: Distribution in Europe, Buchhandlung Walther König. p. 43.

a new device to make the video image disappear, which corresponds to Campus's interest in fabricating instruments to reveal relationships.⁸⁰

Beyond the second and the third transition, which simply utilizes the keying effect to produce a disturbing effect, the first transition is formulated in a more complex condition in which the action of the body in relation to the location of the paper screen and the pre-setup of the cameras plays an interactive and irreplaceable role. While Campus stands close to the paper screen with his back appearing to the viewer, he starts to cut out the middle of the paper screen with a knife. Simultaneously, another knife from the backside of the screen is also stabbing out through the screen and slicing down inward and outward. At this moment, he steps into the crevice while another image of self is also pushing his way forward toward the viewer from the backside of the screen. After one body in and one body out at the same time, he uses tapes to rejoin the broken screen, which closes the partially visible backside of the screen. Obviously, the first transition is filmed by two separated cameras, which are set at the both sides of the screen and facing each other at the center point. Similar to closed-circuit's live feedback loop, Campus superimposes the two recording video images onto the front side of the screen, which creates an overlapping double image of self. Unlike the work *Interface* (1972) which uses a transparent glass to juxtapose the double alter-self, the concrete paper screen blocks the backside of the camera's vision. Only through the crevice, the backside of the camera is able to capture a partial image of Campus's body. As a result, the white paper screen performs a double tasks of loading images from both sides of the camera/screen and also separating their physical condition by building up the crucial order of their spatiality. The white paper screen no longer functions

⁸⁰ In an interview with Marjory Supovitz, in exhib. Cat. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1976, no pig. C., P., (2003), p. 36.

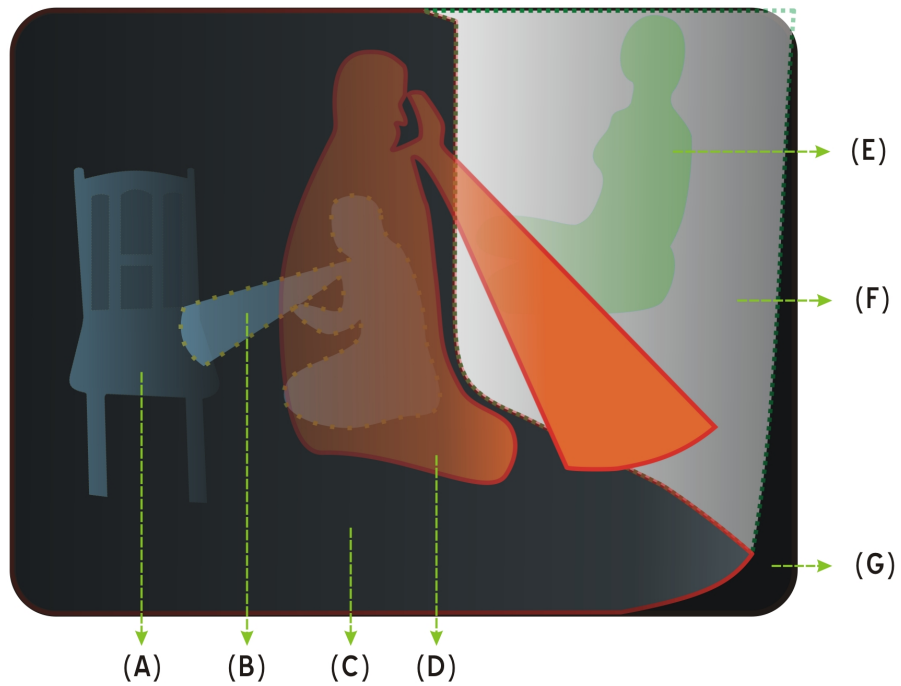
like a canvas that stages its frontality. The normally invisible backside of the screen becomes relevant, even in a condition of total darkness at the beginning. In this respect, the ontology of the screen is significantly different to the ontology of the canvas, not only because of carrying different condition of image's materiality or immateriality. On the one hand, since the screen is able to perform as dual functions: to load and also to divide different layers of images by utilizing both sides of its surfaces, it becomes arguable how the viewer recognizes the screen as flatness or as an illusive depth of frontality. Following from Rosalind Krauss's analysis, the term, frontal, which derives from the architectural or sculptural aspect, "implies a three-dimensional object" or things that "necessarily have backs and sides."⁸¹ In contrast to the canvas, which "[aligns] bands of colour parallel to its surface, insofar as it promotes the painting's frontality"⁸², the screen itself can also be characterized as frontal implication even without objectifying its projected images. Hence, the depth of the layers, which are created by the superimposition, can be controlled by the shape or the physical condition of screen(s) or its double surfaces. However, on the other hand, the screen is no longer like a modernist canvas that claims its privilege as a transcendental given, but rather becomes a quasi-layer of image, which can be fused or overlapped with other layers of images or even other screens. From the cinematic aspect, the screen is no longer the last apparatus to fulfill its goal of representation but rather in a status of indeterminacy, which remains in a condition of openness. I am going to exemplify this point of view by introducing Joan Jonas's early video work *Glass Puzzle* (1973).

⁸¹ Carmean, E. A. (1974) *The great decade of American abstraction*. with an introductory note by Philippe de Montebello, and text and catalogue by E. A. Carmean, Jr. Houston: Museum of Fine Arts. p. 90.

⁸² Carmean, E. A. (1974) *The great decade of American abstraction*. with an introductory note by Philippe de Montebello, and text and catalogue by E. A. Carmean, Jr. Houston: Museum of Fine Arts. p. 90.

Joan Jonas:

Glass Puzzle

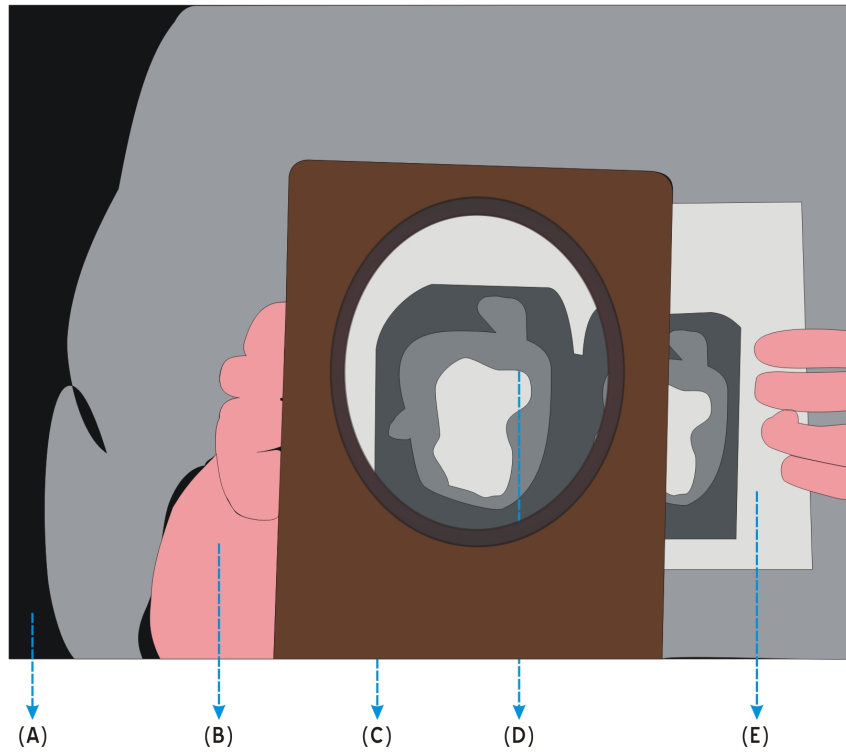


*an excerpt of video image: (a screen shot of a television video)

- (A) screen reflection of a chair, located outside of the screen
- (B) screen reflection of Jonas, performing outside of the screen
- (C) television image of the black paper wall
- (D) television image of Jonas, who is rotating a cone-like prop
- (E) television image of Lois Lane, sitting next to the white wall
- (F) television image of the white wall (behind the black paper)
- (G) screen shot of the frame of the television



Fig. 23: Joan Jonas (1973) *Glass Puzzle*. (excerpt)



*An excerpt of video image: (a screen shot of a television video)

- (A) a screen shot of the television
- (B) television image of Joan Jonas, holding a photograph with hands
- (C) a magnifier between the television screen and the camera
- (D) magnified image of the television screen (the photograph)
- (E) television image of a photograph



Fig. 24: Joan Jonas (1973) *Glass Puzzle*. (excerpt)
Video (B&W), Duration: 17:41 min



Fig. 25: Joan Jonas (1973) *Glass Puzzle*. (excerpt)
Video (B&W), Duration: 17:41 min

A collaboration with artist Lois Lane as a double act, Joan Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* (1973) is a single-channel (black & white in first version) video, which was shot in her Soho loft in New York (see Fig.23-25). By utilizing the similar strategy of closed-circuit, in which Jonas directly re-filmed the television screen, *Glass Puzzle* presents a dynamic transposition between the virtual space inside the screen and the reflected space outside of the television. In one of the interesting clips, while a live feedback video (the pre-recorded images) is displaying from the screen, the reflection on the screen is performing as another layer of visual fragments, which reveals parts of the external filmic environment. (see Fig.26) Because the reflection is created by the polished surface and darkened background image on the screen, as a mirror effect, the changing darkness of the television images enhances the reflection even more strongly and clearly. This playful setup formulates a possibility of interaction between the external space and the inner screen image in which the performers' multiple bodies are able to intervene through the medium of the screen. Each layer of image (the reflection, the video images, and the performative bodies) is no longer the isolated segment, which has its own spatiality and temporality, but rather an undetermined condition of interdependency. The visual-spatial dimension

becomes convertible or at least interruptible through the action of the bodies, in which each layer's state of physicality or quality becomes relevant. The black & white pre-recorded video images function not only as the documentation of a live performance but also as the physical brightness of the screen, which actually control the visibility of the reflection. Besides, the reflection on the screen appears not only as the coincident simulacrum of the external environment but also a ghost-like phantasmagoria, which invades the pre-recorded video image. While the reflection of the performative body moves and changes size on the screen, the illusion of penetrability between layers challenges the viewer's recognition of the layers' spatiality and temporality.

At the beginning, Jonas and Lane perform symmetrically double actions, which simulate a mirror effect. The recognizable differentiations, like identities or spatialities, gradually lose their references because of the change of their positions and locations in relation to physical space. (Fig. 23) Thus, the flickering video, the performative body or the blurred reflection are juxtaposed or partially overlapped as an un-unified hybrid of visuality, a video within a video. Here, the performative bodies execute the vital characters which embody what Jonas named the "sensual space,"⁸³ like a puzzle, that stimulates the viewer's perceptual level of consciousness – a desire to solve or understand the mysterious layering sequences through its visual variation. In this sense, the television images, the reflection and the performative bodies operate as multiple layers of the superimposed images. Here, the appearance of the glass surface of the television screen becomes the marker of its state of physicality. Therefore, the screen's material condition seems to take the place of the image's materiality. The layering multiplication no longer presents itself

⁸³ *Performing the image: Joan Jonas' Glass Puzzle*. LUX, SHACKLEWELL STUDIOS.
<http://lux.org.uk/performing-image-joan-jonas%E2%80%99-glass-puzzle> [accessed on 1. Nov. , 2012]

as a superficial image, which lacks substance, as in Peter Campus' *Three Transitions*, or tempts to emphasize the tactile sensation, which evokes the memory of touch, as in Dennis Oppenheim's *Tooth and Nail* (1970-74), but rather performs a complex correlationship in which the bodies' performative actions are able to plausibly manipulate each layer's visibility by exploiting the screen's physicality. The layers of images are not accumulated, centered, synchronized, superimposed, nor aligned in an easily recognizable order but rather re-generated and evolving from the screen. From this point of view, the screen no longer subordinates or parasitic on the context or the message of the recording image as a part of apparatus. In other words, in Jonas's work, the video image is no longer a simple retransmission of an originary image but rather reappears on the screen and evolves. The screen, accordingly, is treated like a more independent medium generating its own temporality and spatiality between virtuality and reality.

Jonas breaks the hegemonic order of cinematic representation and relocates the power of configuration in the intangibility of the screen. In the sense of the stereotype of manipulation (or editing), the work *Glass Puzzle* suggests a possibility of openness for the video image in which the screen(s) becomes the images' external component. Unlike Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing*, which is separated into two irreversible stages, or VALIE EXPORT's *auf + ab + an + zu* and Peter Campus's *Interface*, which can only survive as an ephemeral live performance, Joan Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* promotes a radical concept of "successive generations of mediation"⁸⁴ as David Joselit described it. Maybe, that's the reason why Jonas was able to further merge this single-channel video into another set of live performances by projecting it again onto a paper screen, as in her contribution to the exhibition: *Electronic Images*:

⁸⁴ Joselit, D., (2004) *Inside the Light Cube*. Artforum International, Vol. 42, No. 7, March. p. 154.

Vodeokunst, 1965-2000, in Esslingen in 2000.⁸⁵ By repurposing the function of the television screen as a material interface, Jonas successfully merges the multiple layers of images from different physical conditions. While the television screen formulates a new temporal and spatial dimension, which reunifies or neutralizes each layer of images' heterogeneity, the performers' bodies actively invade or penetrate through this mutual harmony, which creates a visual interruption for the spectator. Because this interruption is across the virtuality and reality through the medium of screen, which paradoxically combines but also isolates the world inside and outside, the work avoids a condition of closure as long as the screen gains its privileged power to facilitate its visuality. Here, the ontology of the screen is acting like an independent medium performing its own automatism as a surface of self-generation. Hence, the video images of this bodily engagement should not be simply recognized as a documentation of the live performance or a final cinematic production of video but rather a temporal interruption of artistic activity, which can become an element for the further engagement or assemblage, like Joan Jonas's recreation work. I believe this is a key point to relocate the motif of the video image and also interrogate the medium of the screen in order to discover a new condition of visual-spatial layering for bodily engagement. If we can direct our attention to the physical condition of the screen instead of its familiar invisibility, projection might suggest a more radical relationship with the screen(s). Since the light of the projection can more actively perform as a kind of physical element, the external environment no longer passively compromises with the darkness of the video image as a reflection on the screen, like Jonas's *Glass Puzzle*, but rather actively attacks or intervenes upon the screen and its source of recorded images.

⁸⁵ Electronic Images: Vodeokunst, 1965-2000, Villa Merkel/Bahnwaterhaus, Esslingen Germany. (2000).

Reading Dante III:

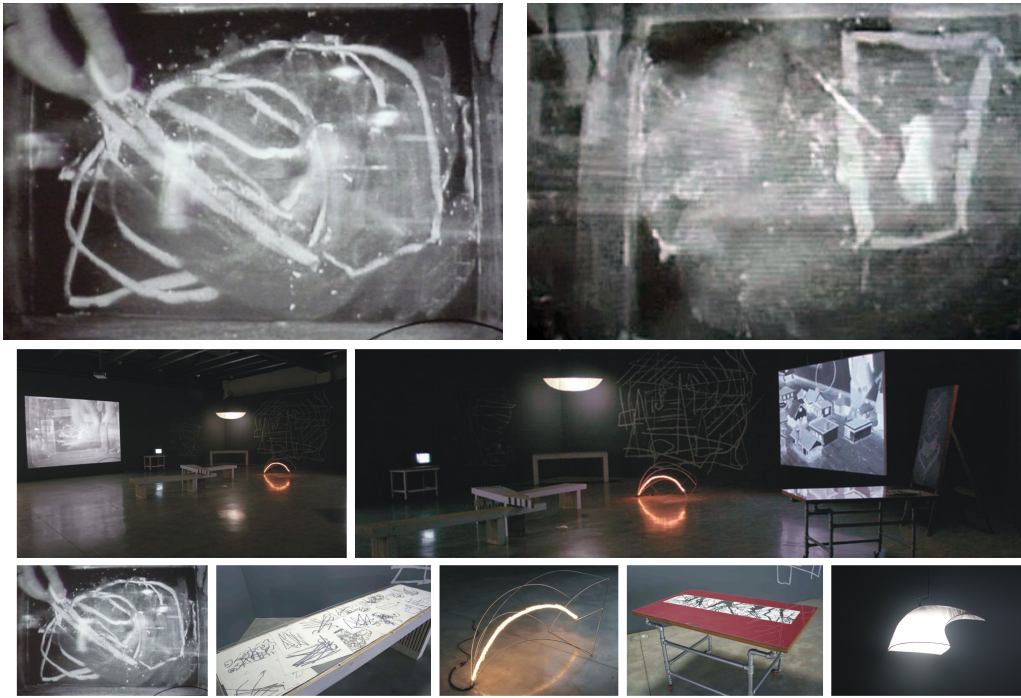


Fig. 26. Joan Jonas (2010) *Reading Dante III*.
at Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York

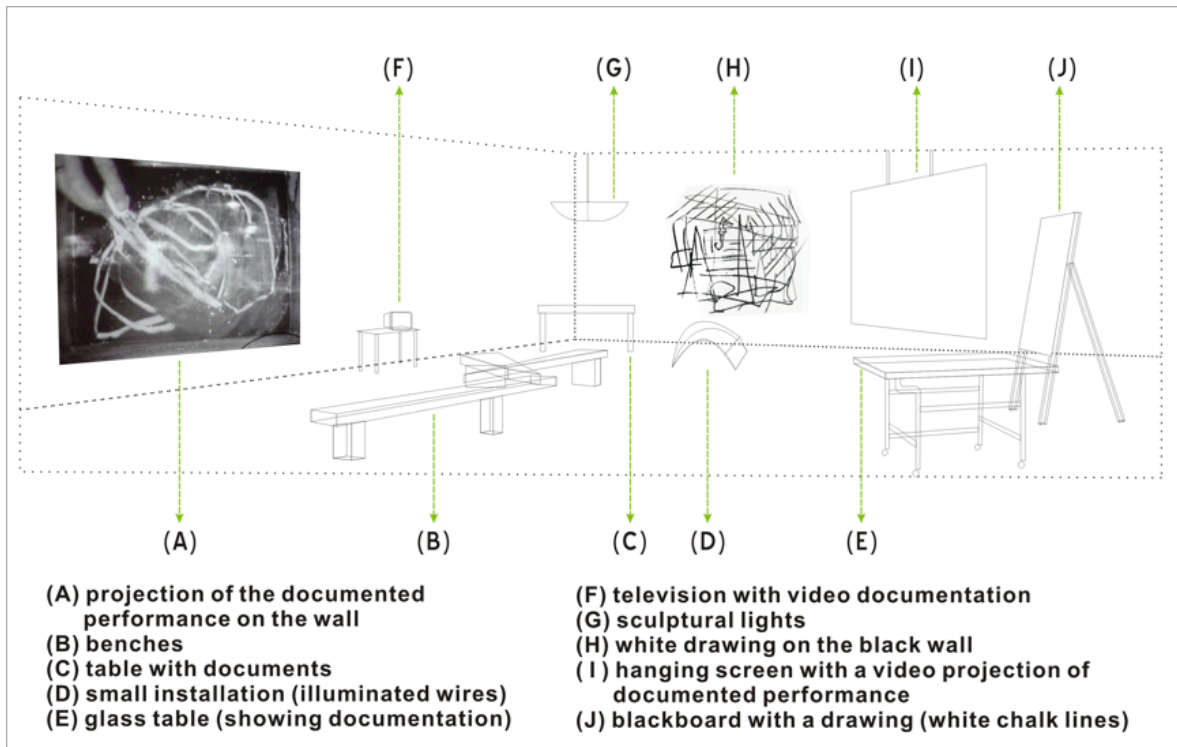


Fig. 27 – Diagram: Joan Jonas (2010) *Reading Donte III*.
at Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York

Aside from focusing on the screen, in terms of emphasizing its physicality, another variable factor is the role of colour in a filming and projected condition, or in another perspective, its reflected illumination or brightness. Since the filming process eliminates the materiality of the reality, the idea of drawing transforms itself into the colours of light, as in Jonas's video of drawing. Except addressing the question of how colour can change the layers of the projected images, its most extreme value, black and white, even more radically perform as the embodiment of nothingness or what David Katz named "pronouncedness" (*Ausgepragtheit*)⁸⁶, which is variable according to its brightness. Here, I would like to propose that, through the light of projection, both black and white can perform the dual phenomena of nothingness and pronouncedness, nevertheless, and can work toward a quite different tendency. Of course, it is controversial whether black is a colour or not. From the physicist's perspective, pure black is the absence of colour because it cannot reflect any light to cast any colour, like a shadow. However, from Henri Matisse's point of view, in his painting *Gourds* (1914), he metaphorically used pure black as the colour of light instead of a colour of darkness⁸⁷, in order to overcome what Francis Gooding stated: the failure of "transpositions" in colour and light. Gooding exemplified this point by explaining that:

[n]o red paint adequately speaks of the red that is generated in the eye by light reflected from a petal: but the metaphor is strong enough to hold. The metaphorical constructs that allow us to see an image in a painting will overcome difficult tests, but pure light itself is more powerful than any analogy,

⁸⁶ Katz, D., (1935) *The World of Colour*. London: Kegan Paul. / Birren, F., (1976) *Color Perception in Art: Beyond the Eye into the Brain*. Leonardo, Vol. 9, No.2 (Spring). p. 109.

⁸⁷ Barr, A. H., (1966) *Matisse, his art and his public*. New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Arno Press. p. 190.

and will speak over and above the paint.⁸⁸

The discrepancy between what we literally see and what we metaphorically recognize is immeasurable or, at least, graspable but only in a relationship of interdependency. On the one hand, while the metaphor orchestrates our imagination that offers a definite sense of illumination, the viewer has to somehow ignore what the eye literally sees in order to overcome its analogical differences. On the other hand, the opaque pigment, which absorbs or reflects the light, offers the visibility of its appearance, the viewer has to somehow ignore the colour or the brightness of the light. However, the un-reflected black actually absorbs all the light, in which the pure light cannot affect its appearance either in metaphorical or literal sense. Hence, black functions as a force to erase both the pigment and the canvas and suggest an illusion of nothingness. By contrast, white functions as a part of frontal surface (canvas) to vivify the colour of light (pronouncedness). This is evident in a short clip of Jonas's *Reading Dante III* (2010) (see Fig. 26 & 27) and is a reoccurring topos of Jonas's work since 2007. While the video shows how she is drawing with a white chalk on a blackboard, there is another video projection overlapping onto the surface with a small scale of Jonas' body image walking around. Through the duration of displaying (or representing), we can see how Jonas is spontaneously interacting with projected images by drawing on and also wiping off the chalk from the blackboard in order to control or accentuate the projection's visibility. Here, the colour of black & white becomes an agent or a controllable medium to facilitate or control the (non-)visibility of the layers of images (the light of the projection).

⁸⁸ Gooding, F. (2009) *Black light: myth and meaning in modern painting*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell. p.34.

But, if we look back to Jonas's *Glass Puzzle*, the function of the colour of black and white is dramatically different. Since the reflection on the television screen depends on the colour of the video images, the colour of black performs as a power to make visible the reflected images (pronouncedness) while the colour of white performs as a power to erase or obscure the reflected images (nothingness). Here, we can see that if we try to expand the medium of drawing into the field of moving images (video), the intensity of light becomes the vital element for manipulating its visibility and the condition of the screen becomes a complex interface that can replace or transform the images' temporality and spatiality by channeling its visuality into variable physical conditions. In a discussion of closed-circuit in relation to projection and painting, David Joselit has claimed that "video projection invents a way to introduce figuration into the rigorously flat virtual space that had been associated with modernist painting."⁸⁹ In this point of view, Joselit tried to lead our attention back to the viewer's passive spectatorship and suggested that:

"In video projection the viewer is made more passive both in her consumption of spectacular imagery and in her ability to intervene within the space of the screen. Nonetheless, her loss of access inside the video circuit is partly compensated for by a resurgence of the phenomenological radicality invented by modernist painting."⁹⁰

However, since Joselit also claimed that closed-circuit's commitment of interactivity is the opposite of a theatrical mode of privatization in the narrative form, video projection should not be limited as the rigorously flatness, which symbolizes the characteristic of modernist painting. But what is the key point to connect painting

⁸⁹ Joselit, D., (2004) *Inside the Light Cube*. Artforum International, Vol. 42, No. 7, March. 2004. p. 156.

⁹⁰ Joselit, D., (2004) *Inside the Light Cube*. Artforum International, Vol. 42, No. 7, March. 2004. p. 156.

and video projection? One of the clues may be found through Joeslit's observation of the screen. As in Stan Douglas's *Win, Place, or Show* (1998), "the possible coherent form could emerge"⁹¹ through the juxtaposition of the screens in which the continuous actions may disappear and reappear. Except being obsessive with the concepts of planarity and juxtaposition, which restrict us to thinking in terms of modernism, the idea of layering with screens and images suggests a more open and productive way for exploration in the configuration of image. The strategy of closed-circuit can be one of the solutions for realigning the (in)coherent layers of the screens with multiple layers of moving images in different temporal dimensions, in live or delayed time, and can still enable direct bodily engagement. Moreover, since the intensity (or brightness) of light gains its privilege to control our visibility through the video and projection, what happens if we give up the pigments' physicality and directly use the light to make a painting? This question is more like a cliché for a photographer in view of the history of light drawing which can be traced back to Étienne-Jules Marey and Georges Demeny in 1889.⁹² But I will claim that it is still quite a challenge for moving images. In this respect, I have already examined Picasso's light drawings, which have a close relationship with a painter's body and drawing. Now I would like to elaborate a bit more about layering of the images in relation to the layers of screens. *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things* was a live performance in the basement of Dia Beacon in 2005 and 2006, conceived and directed by Joan Jonas with original piano score by Jason Moran. (see Fig. 28-31) The central text of the performance is a collage of fragments made up of quotations from art historian Aby Warburg's notes for a lecture delivered in 1923 in Kreuzlingen.⁹³

⁹¹ Joselit, D., (2004) *Inside the Light Cube*. Artforum International, Vol. 42, No. 7, March. 2004. p. 156.

⁹² Étienne-Jules Marey and Georges Demeny (1889) *Pathological walk from in front*. Archives of the College de France. [made visible by incandescent bulbs fixed to the joints circa]

⁹³ Jonas, J., (2006) *Joan Jonas: the shape, the scent, the feel of things*. edited by Karen Kelly. New

The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things:

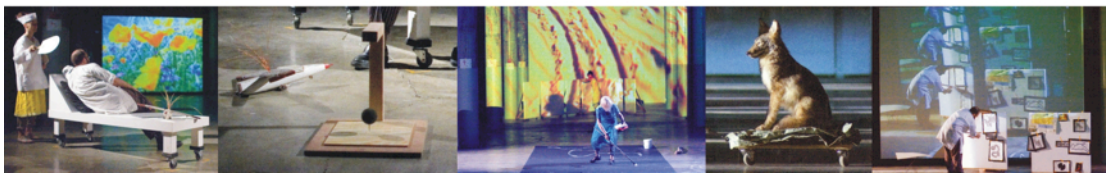
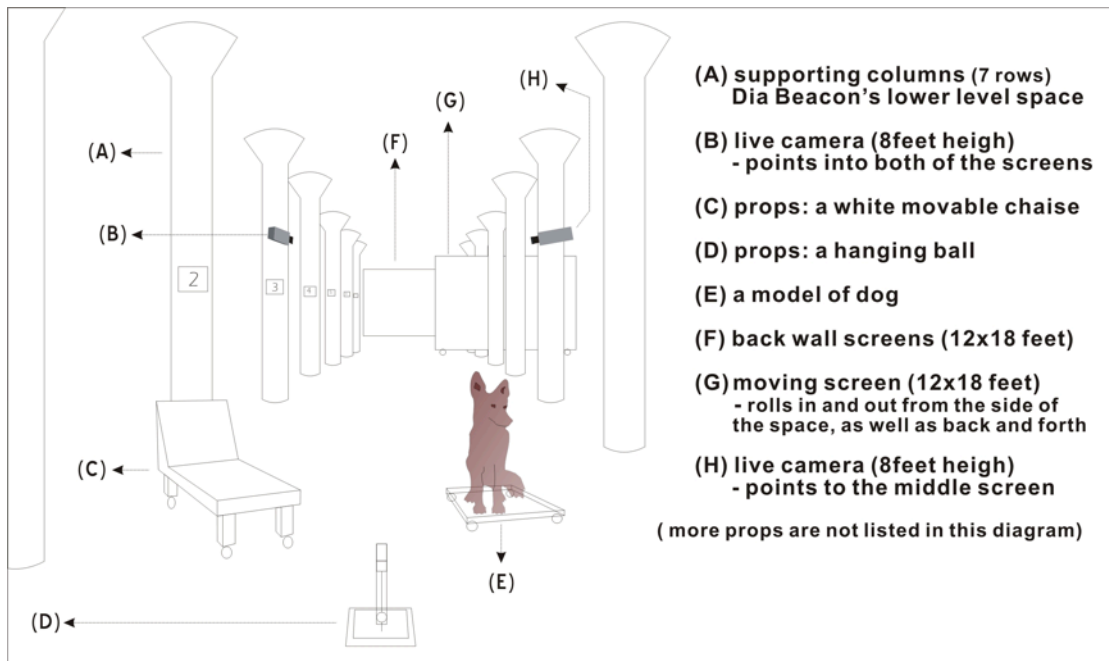


Fig. 28 – Diagram: Joan Jonas (2005) *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*.
at Dia Beacon Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 29: Joan Jonas (2005) *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*.
at Dia Beacon Art Foundation, New York

Quoted from the catalogue of the Dia performance:

Video Projection and Technical Detail:

During different stages of the performance, the video is projected onto a large screen (12x18 feet), which rolls on wheels and is silently moved by two additional performers. The video projections occur in three different positions in the corridor of the performing area: one is on the far wall of the corridor; another is approximately at the midpoint between the audience and the back wall; and one is near, positioned directly behind the area of the chaise. The latter two exist on the moving screen, which rolls in and out from the side of the space, as well as back and forth, in the corridor, creating an illusion of an expanding and shrinking wall. The projections are usually sized in relation of the screen but at times spill over onto the adjacent rows of columns, thus immersing the entire space with the projected image, creating a visceral, all-over environment. An unseen technician controls these variations. The projected video material cuts back and forth between a live camera and prerecorded video material. The image serves as a backdrop and a parallel narrative space, as well as an environment in which figures onstage enter a shifting figure-ground relationship. The live cam produces a visual illusion that alters the perception of the space and is created by the video feedback effect in the video projection. This effect is created by pointing a video camera into its own image. Two cameras record the live action. Each is attached to a column in the middle of the space on the left and right sides at the heights of eight feet. One points into the screen at the the back of the space, as well as into the middle screen, while the other points only to the middle screen. Feedback on the far screen creates the illusion of an endless corridor lined by columns,

extending far beyond its actual physical depth. Additionally, it multiplies any action of the performers occurring within this framed space. The performance and the video projection become closely integrated as they echo each other. In the case of the middle-screen feedback, the live cam creates different effects of spatial geometry, owing to the shortened distance.⁹⁴

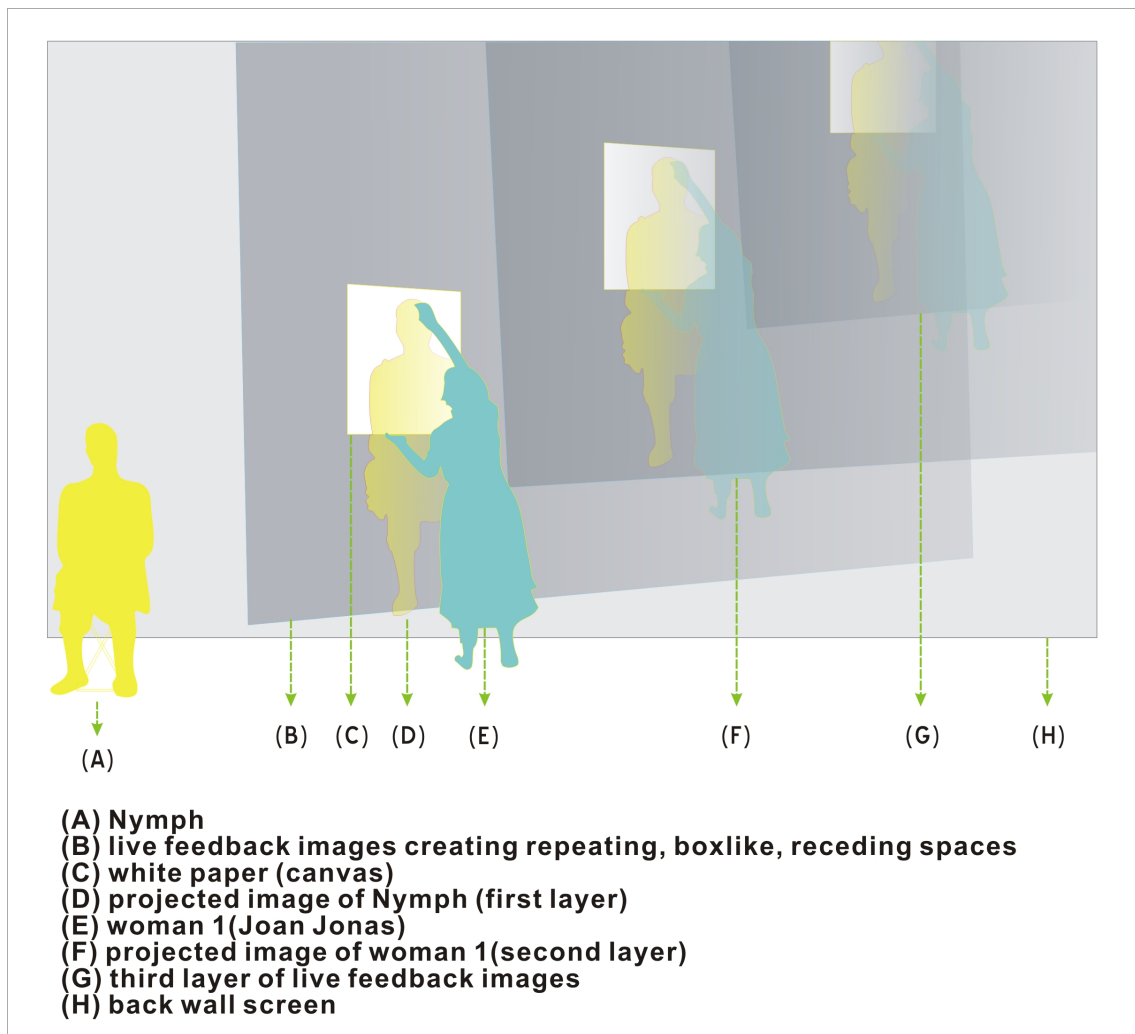


Fig. 30 – Diagram: scene 13, *The Library*.
 Joan Jonas (2005) *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*.
 at Dia Beacon Art Foundation, New York

⁹⁴ Jonas, J., (2006) *Joan Jonas: the shape, the scent, the feel of things*. edited by Karen Kelly. New York: Dia Art Foundation; Paris; New York: Yvon Lambert. p. 15.

Woman 1 walks toward the seated Nymph. Holding the paper behind her, Woman 1 frames her presence. The Nymph, in turn, gets up and moves behind the paper, so that she is now hidden. Woman and Nymph continue to move in relation to each other in front of and behind the paper. The paper serves as a device, behind which the Nymph either disappears or reframes herself. Nymph leaves stage left. Woman 1 slowly walks off on the right side of the stage.⁹⁵



Fig. 31: Joan Jonas (2005) *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*.
at Dia Beacon Art Foundation, New York

The performance consists of 16 scenes. However, I am particularly interested in scene 13 *The library* (see Fig. 29-31). A series of descending or receding layers of images, which are created by the closed-circuit setup, constitute a whole new complex spectatorship between the multiple layers of projections, the moving screens, the canvas, the draughtswoman (woman 1), and the actor (Nymph) sitting down on the left side of the video projection (her body multiplied four times in the

⁹⁵ Jonas, J., (2006) *Joan Jonas: the shape, the scent, the feel of things*. edited by Karen Kelly. New York: Dia Art Foundation; Paris; New York: Yvon Lambert. p. 42.

image). The very first layer of the drawing, which includes the paper, the lines of drawing and the light of the projection, is similar to VALIE EXPORT's *auf+ab+und+zu* as an interactive live performance of drawing process. But, with the juxtaposition of the proliferative layers of images (screens), each layer becomes interrelated and the quality of the images becomes comparable, especially in relation to the very first tangible layer of reality. While the pigments of the drawing from the paper (canvas) are transformed into the colour of light for the rest of the layers onto the screen, the original drawing from the paper becomes the reference for the rest of the layers of images, which obviously are derived from the first layer. On the screen, the viewer is no longer seeing the drawing literally but as an illusion of the expanded imagery. In the Jonas's work, the first layer's rich, high density colour becomes the metaphor of its origin for the rest of the layers. The synchronization of the layers of images emphasizes their homogeneity as a set of live feedback images but also reflects each layer's difference as the recycled image signal loses quality. The images of the bodies, as the recognizable references for spatial scale, obstruct each image-layer and the screen's spatiality and temporality but also present themselves as a chain of kinetic movements. Even though this visual repetition seems to be redundant, and obviously straightforward in terms of the context of the drawing images, the unfolded multiplication of the layers of images on the screen actually suggest the possibility of transmission and comparability, which is similar to Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing*. If we can see these layers of images as a single stage of a drawing process, the transmission from one stage to another will open out the possibility of re-arranging and re-ordering the layers of images, in which the condition of each layer is no longer a fixed. One possible way is to reshoot the whole scene (first stage) from the screen and re-project it onto another surface of canvas, screen, or even bodies as the surface for the second stage of the drawing process.

Therefore, since the first stage contains rather complex temporal and spatial dimension, the interaction and comparison between these two stages or even more stages will provoke a spectatorship in which the viewer's perception is raised to a higher level of complexity. The performative drawing process is no longer limited as the signification of bodily expression but is able to manifest or challenge its medium's characteristics or ontology. As a result, the layers of the images, including the tangible canvas, the material pigments, and the light of projection and the colour of the light, combine to create a complex apparatus of independent elements. The drawing can keep evolving through different screens, surfaces or any interfaces. It becomes hard to recognize the medium of the drawing or to determine whether it is still the layers of drawing or the layers of video projection. This condition of indeterminacy opens out the possibility for transpositions from painting to video, from colour to light, from material to immaterial, from visible to invisible, from real to virtual, or from touchable to untouchable, vice versa.

Conclusion:

The reason why I consider the correlation between projected moving image and painting in both of my practice and text is because they confront or share similar characteristics: surface and its material support (pigment and canvas, light and screen). This approach does not suggest that painting performs as a conceptual origin and is not concerned with expansion of painting or cinema. Unlike the strategy of centralizing cinema in a transcendental position, namely "expanded cinema," my intention is to utilize painting references in a spatial, temporal and performative way in order to awaken or provoke viewer's

attention within a broader scope. As already mentioned, through the experimental development of my practice, the focus of the project changed during the progress of the research. I came to realize that the references to painting in my installations actually drew attention to the materiality of the screens rather than to the form or aesthetic history of painting as such. Again, the function of the painting references was to emphasize the physicality of the screens and surfaces on which the projections fell. Therefore, this is no longer merely a matter of painting or filmic imagery but rather a matter of the screen in relation to its projected image.

As discussed in the first chapter, Pipilotti Rist exemplifies how to use video projection to create an illusionistic environmental space, in which the spectator is immersed in filmic narratives, as with her 2011 installation at the Hayward Gallery, *Lobe of The Lung* (2009-2011). My approach moves in the opposite direction to affirm the screen's physicality and create a non-immersive relation to the imagery that appears on the screen. Here the direct bodily engagement performs as a discontinuous transition that can realign screens and spaces. From this standpoint, the boundary of the projected moving image is no longer contained by the projection's frame but rather is expanded onto or beyond the frontal screen(s). In this sense, the effect of the projected moving image is expanded and conditioned by the installation. In my own works, the duration of the moving image can't be separated from the whole spatial-temporal complex of the installation, with its combination of colour, light, filmic image and screens. Since each screen creates its own surface which reframes or restructures the projected image, the original content of the moving image is transformed into an unfixed and dynamic element. The screen no longer performs as an invisible

interface to separate the world inside (the internal filmic imagery) and the world outside (the external space). Rather it becomes the central motif. The screen both manifests and questions its own ontology. Nevertheless, bodily engagement plays a vital role in drawing forth the viewer's attention to the materiality of the screen.

The analysis of Dennis Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1970) is important for me. In Germano Celant's words, this work shows how to "[break] down materials or [build] up an account through images"⁹⁶ by spectacularizing the gesture as the privileged visual trope of corporeality. As discussed earlier in the text, the whole installation of *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* creates a notion of ritual reflexive depiction in a form of either "a destructive or a revelatory effect."⁹⁷ The strategy of inscribing bodily movement in a ritual manner, which partially prolongs, extends, or expands the drawn image without confining its materiality, opens out the possibility of transforming a spatial pattern into a temporal video. The work interrogates tactility and visibility from the perspective of the draughtsman. As previously discussed, it plays on an interactive relationship between the child and the adult draughtsmen. This raises questions of hierarchical power, the relation between touch and sight and the layering of images and surfaces. As in the title of the work, two irreversible stages are created. The patterns of the drawings from the two stages can only be related and produced through the participants' bodies, not through the television screens. The discrepancy between the original patterns and their drawn reproduction is embedded as the main motif of the work. This resultant

⁹⁶ Oppenheim, D., (2001) *Dennis Oppenheim: explorations*. [edited by] Germano Celant. Milano: Charta. p.9.

⁹⁷ Wollen, P., (1993) *Raiding the icebox: reflections on twentieth-century culture*. London; New York: Verso. p. 75.

discrepancy is what cannot be reversed in the process of the work. Oppenheim here creates a kind of bodily engagement that is very significant for my project. The bodies function here in several ways: they operate as screens for the drawn images and also as sensory contact surfaces for receiving tactile-visual information.

By following the question of realignment between the two stages (two filmic projections or television screens), this investigation is led toward the projection's physicality, as in VALIE EXPORT's *Auf + ab + an + zu* (1968), in which the participants are able to re-engage the filmic images through the external apparatus (the projection and the screen). Beyond editing the filmic element, VALIE EXPORT's *Auf + ab + an + zu* opens a spatial field for the active participants, who are invited to interact with (or learn from) what EXPORT calls the "pattern film"⁹⁸ through the direct contact with the projection on the paper screen. In this work, with its combination of projection and mark-making participation, the stress on the synchronization of the different elements relates the concept of montage to bodily transition, which questions the fundamental condition of a drawing practice. In this work by EXPORT, bodily engagement, where participant-viewers imprint their bodies and gestures onto the paper screen, generates a "reproduced reproduction" in a new sense of time, as a live event. Within the time duration of the projected film, the performance occupies the central role, in which the participants emphasize the rhythms of the film. The performative production of mark-making in VALIE EXPORT's work is not transmitted in a single direction, as in Oppenheim's *Two Stage Drawing*. Rather it is set in the *immediacy* of a fluctuating exchange between material and

⁹⁸ A.L. Rees ... [et al.]. (2011) *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film*. London: Tate. p. 291.

immaterial, visibility and invisibility, subject and object, presentation and representation, embodiment and mechanization, production and reproduction, et cetera. The filmic image here has been expanded into external reality not only physically but also conceptually. Inevitably, the question of the function of a screen in comparison to a canvas becomes a crucial issue in terms of mutualizing drawing and film. In *Auf + ab + an + zu* the screen, when it has been rendered as a performative drawing, functions as the final state or layer of the image. Thus, the screen converts itself into the drawing instead of remaining as the container of the genetic filmic content. The drawing stands as the trace of an ephemeral coincidence of the embodied performative actions and the projected film image. *Auf + ab + an + zu* therefore produces a temporal separation between screen or filmic element on the one hand and drawing or bodily engagement element on the other hand. The concept of the closed-circuit might provide a possible means of repositioning the participants' bodies and their instantaneous engagement in relation to the filmic or projected material in real or delayed time.

In Peter Campus's *Interface* (1972), the space-time in action is folded onto the glass as the participant confronts her/his own projected and mirrored images on the glass. This plays the role of the screen by accumulating illusions and creating a false depth of the visual field. But the glass also functions like a quasi-canvas, becoming the indivisible location of the filmic images. The participants' bodies are projected and reflected in a doubly altered form and are always self-reflexive and kinetically related through movement in time. This experience of the viewer watching him/herself from the outside creates an experimental alienation that formulates a new structure of layers of superimposition. It is significant that the layers are related to the body here in

the sense that they correspond to the participant's movement in real time. In this work the viewer has to maintain a distance from the glass screen in order to see the image of themselves correctly. So, the distancing together with the lack of tangible material produces a kind of alienated embodiment. On one hand, the glass functions as a screen. On the other hand, it performs as a mirror for the participant viewer. The viewer's presence in this closed-circuit video installation activates a doubling of his/her image on the glass, where two images of the participant's body seem to come into contact with each other. Through this glass screen, the participant engaging in this work faces two images simultaneously of him/herself. While the glass reflects a color image with well-defined contours, the recorded image projected in black and white presents a more fragile form. Because of the position of the projector in relation to the camera, which is behind the glass, the projected image is represented in reverse compared to the mirrored reflection. In effect the image is flipped twice. The participant viewer is confronted with two images of him/herself: one a real mirror image, the other a camera image. Because of the mechanical nature of the closed-circuit setting, which transmits live feedback of what the camera records, the camera also performs as a quasi-screen. The oriented position of the camera creates another perspective, which is different to the one accumulated onto the screen, like the drawing in VALIE EXPORT's *Auf + ab + an + zu*. Therefore, within the closed-circuit installation setting, a screen can generate at least three different perspectives: one from the camera sensor; another the variability of the surface of the screen itself as the bearer of both projected light and physical markings; and as a third, the physical reflectivity of the screen as a literal mirror. In the works I have chosen to examine, there is no simple linear time but rather complex layerings of space-time which reconstruct the durations of time and the

physicality of the space or location. These reconstructions by means of what I call the layers of images (in both spatial and temporal dimensions) are evident in Joan Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* (1973). In this work, as well as Campus's *Interface*, the screen becomes the illusionistic surface for an experience of bodily engagement which is not available in the real space.

Peter Campus's other work *Three Transitions* pushes the idea of the screen even further. The normally invisible back side of the screen becomes important. The rise of the screen as a format, or even something like a medium in itself in this work, challenges the privileging of the camera as the origin or exclusive source of the resultant image. In the works I have discussed by Campus and Jonas, the screen does structure the resultant image in ways that make it much more than just the bearer of the projected filmic image supplied by the camera.

Following this, it is not surprising to turn to Joan Jonas next. Her *Glass Puzzle* not only confuses the viewer's perception but also suggests that the screen can perform as an independent medium generating its own layers of images, which have their own temporality and spatiality referencing or confusing the virtual or real world. Most importantly, Jonas's performative action is still able to re-manipulate each layer's visuality and penetrate through the different layers. On the one hand, the screen is no longer subordinate or parasitic upon the recording image as a part of apparatus; on the other hand, the video image is no longer a simple retransmission of an original image but rather reappears on the screen and evolves. Jonas manipulates the imagery by operating in between the screen's materiality and its imagery.

In some clips of Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* the different layers of images appear and disappear constantly on the screen. Jonas uses a closed-circuit here in which a television screen is itself being filmed and shown on another screen. When it appears reproduced on this other screen we see the image of light reflections on the television screen. The image of the reflection on the 'source' screen only becomes visible on the 'reproduction' screen at the moments when the prerecorded images are relatively dark. Therefore the layer of the prerecorded images functions like a regulator that generates its own automatism and manipulates other layers' conditions. Therefore, the performance of Jonas outside the screen becomes a predetermined consequence and turns into a passive fragmented reflection on the screen: what I consider as a time-delayed stage performance rather than an active live response. Unlike Oppenheim's *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1971) in which the performative bodies actively promote the physical and sensory determination in a real time, Jonas's *Glass Puzzle* presents a contradiction between the desire of active participation from the performative bodies and its failure of enactment. The material condition of the screen, on one hand, facilitates the bodily engagement from the world outside of the screen because of its ability to cast reflection. But on the other hand, the illuminative nature of the screen overwhelms the active performance's incarnation, their reflection. Hence, I describe part of Jonas's *Reading Dante III* in order to demonstrate how the projection screen can function differently than the television screen, how projection can spatialize the layers of filmic images for active bodily engagement and how the physical screen becomes immaterialized through the closed-circuit condition.

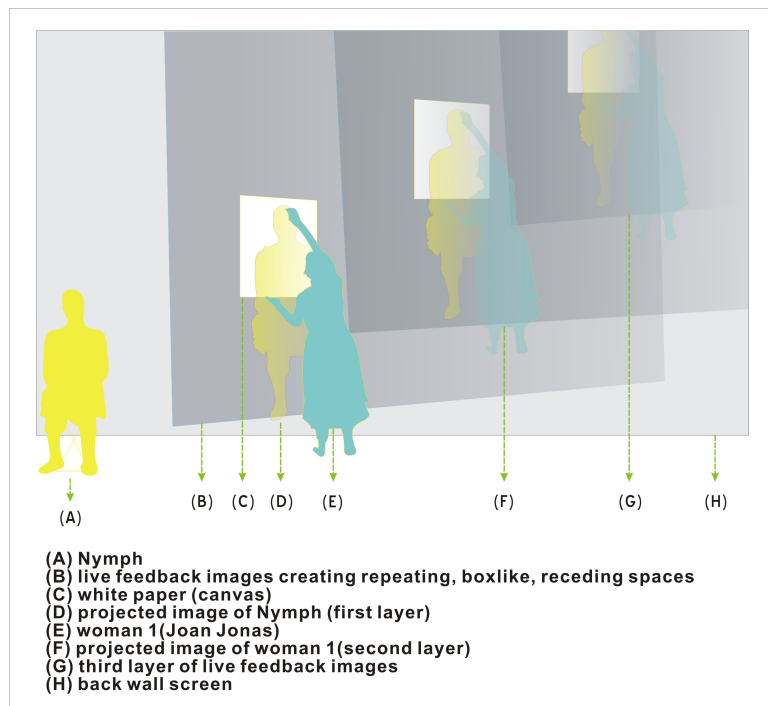


Fig. 32 – Diagram: scene 13, *The Library*.

Joan Jonas (2005) *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*.

In scene 13 (*The library*) from *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things* (see Fig. 32), Joan Jonas continues utilizing the closed-circuit setting that projects the proliferative layers of live feedback images onto a tangible screen, to execute a portrait drawing. While a performer acts as a model in front of the screen, Jonas holds a small canvas reframing the model’s projection on the screen and makes a portrait drawing onto it. Since the live camera creates the proliferative layers of live feedback images, the Droste effect (‘mise en abyme’), the layers of projected images are generated in a pecking order in terms of the images’ spatial resolution. The mobilized canvas plays a double function to reframe the projected images, like a screen, and to interrupt the successive layers of images. This systematic construction of ‘mise en abyme’ is deconstructed and also re-constructed by Jonas’s active bodily engagement by using the hand-held canvas and her performative mark-making. In fact, the order of layering is changed which corresponds to her position and her decision where to reframe

the image through the hand-held canvas. Her bodily engagement performs as the transition to reconstruct the successive layers. This condition of interruption not only changes the spatiality of the layers but also offers a possibility for the participant to alter the order. I believe that this unfixed condition of arbitrariness in freely realigning the image sequences is a key point. It suggests a way of spatializing the temporality of video at least in a productively indeterminate interim or zone of potentiality.

After the examination of screen, layers, bodily engagement, and the concept of the closed-circuit, one vital element seems to be missing: the light of the projection. The filmic image has the special characteristic of transforming tangible materiality into illusion-bearing light. Its power of visualization resides in its colour, illumination and the imagery reflected on the screen. Projected light itself, obviously, can be seen as another kind of immaterialized (or alternatively materialized) pigment, like Anthony McCall describes as “one of the irreducible, necessary conditions of film”.⁹⁹ However, unlike McCall’s “solid light film” treating the light-beam as a physical medium without any coded information, which suspends a flat surface (the screen), I am more interested in its hybrid condition in which the projected light beam’s carried message is also relevant. I take this to mean that projected light, for McCall, is not a passive transmitter of the visual representations of the filmic narrative, but is a physical or sculptural structure in its own right. Although in his own projected light works, McCall generally does not use filmic imagery (in the conventional sense), I regard his work as a point of departure which suggests how the physicality of projected light can be used in installations that also employ filmic imagery. This

⁹⁹ P. Adams, (1978) *The Avant-garde film: a reader of theory and criticism*. NY: New York University Press.p.250.

confrontation between filmic imagery and the projection's physicality is important because it creates an interruption that challenges the viewer's perception and opens out the possibility for bodily engagement since the materiality of the projection becomes activated, but also set in contrast to the spatiality of the filmic imagery.

From the above examination of different artworks from several different contexts, we can see that there is a rich vocabulary of possibilities for works operating between screen, filmic imagery, projected light and participant viewers as embodied elements of the installation. The performative bodily engagement which both facilitates and is facilitated by this kind of interaction can generate discontinuous transitions in space and time. This kind of hybrid of the projected moving image can offer unique possibilities for generating discontinuous layers of space-time through the varied functions and varied activations of the screen. The screen here can no longer be seen as a pure invisible apparatus for presenting the filmic content but instead occupies a dominant position. It can alter our perspective in both conscious and perceptual ways. It can do this by being configured in an installation as both a physical object and a surface for presenting a filmic image. This dual function of the screen allows for the kinds of bodily engagement that I have described in this text. However, the multiplication of functions for the screen, which enables a multiplication of spatial and temporal layers in the artwork, simultaneously engages and displaces the participant viewer. The multiplication of layers not only creates multiple durations of space-time but can also defer the effects of the participant's bodily engagement as unfixed segments which can be then made available for further re-manipulation.

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