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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Winchester School of Art

**The Double Squint, two places made one: affect
and audio-visual installations**

By

Tessa Joan Atton

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2023

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Abstract
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The Double Squint, two places made one: affect and audio-visual installations
Tessa Joan Atton

Through five audio-visual installations representing three scenarios, this research project considers place-specific affect: the affect produced when two contrasting places are brought together to form a third, different place. Each installation focusses on combining or superimposing views of two or more places that are familiar in some way but become a different, unfamiliar, third place through this superimposition. Through this resulting dislocation the project seeks to gain a new understanding of place-specific affect.

The metaphor of the Double Squint, where two normally impossible (or unlikely) views are brought together, is woven throughout the practice and reflected in the written thesis in which theoreticians, artists and the works in this project are discussed in a verbal tapestry of juxtapositions that reflect the superimposition and contextual overlapping in the practice as described below.

Through the works of writers and artists concerning affect, place and power/relationships this project posits definitions that seek to be consistent through the three works. Similarly, the practical application of these is explored through work focussing specifically on place, frames/ thresholds and the use of sound. The affect produced combines the expectations and experience of the viewer with the choice of both audio-visual footage and the specific site of its installation. The entrance of the viewer into the space of the installation triggers a process of affect which generates a third place, which is the point of intersection of all these elements: the visual elements, the location and the mind of the subject (viewer). This combination of places/elements/viewer produces another space and affect which is the seat of the art.

The sites/places chosen for this project share key features: their influence, whether positive or negative, on our life experiences and, therefore, on our expectations on being exposed to them, their connotations re the locus of power, our experience and understanding of the concept of home or belonging, and their physical architecture. The three pieces also share an emphasis on the accompanying sounds which, although actually those heard whilst the footage was being filmed, serve to add to the dislocation.

Still small voice brings together two different churches in a large lecture theatre and its foyer, the pulpit and pews being reflected in the dais and seating. *I don't have much news* is confined to the home, combining a repetition of daily routine with a narrow view of the outside world through the television screen and is screened in both a large, empty lecture theatre and an empty office. *Body and soul* returns to power hierarchies. Featuring old anatomy and operating theatres it focusses on wealth versus poverty and women's position in this and is screened in a small lecture theatre and conference suite, implicating the spectator more closely in the potential spectacle and referencing life drawing in the art school.

Through the scenarios/installations encompassed by this project the location of art as a conceptual space is questioned. The practice is the basis for reflection on ideas of site-specificity, temporality and affect in contemporary art, above all, affect. The outcomes of the project extend these ideas and may prove of significant value to other artists and writers in the field.

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Tessa Joan Atton

Title of thesis: *The Double Squint, two places made one: affect and audio-visual installations*

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: (Tessa Atton)

Date: 24.08.2023

The Double Squint, two places made one: affect and audio-visual installations

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a. Setting the scene

“To the Porch. For some of us poor souls, a powerful, heavily weighted set of injunctions are triggered at one’s impending entrance to a church. “Hush”, “be solemn”, “speak when you’re spoken to”,.....I put my hand on the latch, and the church has me in its grip. Will I be the same when I come back out as now at the point of going in? Crosses my mind, will I get back out? Or will I be condemned to life as an anchorite, staring and muttering at the High Altar through a “squint” in a wall, from a kneeling position in one’s own future grave?” These words are quoted from Colin Harper’s¹ contribution to *The Double Squint, 42 Views* (2015 p. 128), my book of collected responses to visits to the church in Stoke Charity as described in this chapter.

A squint, a hagioscope, a literal example of the threshold between the powerful and the powerless, those who belong and the outsider. In preparation for his visit Harper had read the history of the squint and let his imagination take him into the anchorite cell, the symbol of the ultimate rejection of the world by those who chose to make their home, immured for life, in a small cell. These cells were usually built on the side of a church, with a small opening for food to be brought and waste removed, possibly another small opening to provide light and a view into an enclosed garden and, most importantly, a final opening to give a narrow view into the church, just to the altar, through a small, oblique opening in the stonework – the squint.

Harper need not have worried: the squint in Stoke Charity served, and continues to serve, a very different purpose, but a symbol of power/powerlessness nonetheless. Even though tiny, this particular church has two naves, two chancels and two altars. To the north is the original Saxon church, to the south that of the later, larger Norman building constructed on the side of the older church. The two naves are opened up by two large arches but the chancels, and therefore the altars, are still separated, so the Norman architect devised two angled apertures in the stonework separating the chancels. This enabled whoever was sitting in the clergy seat to have a view of both altars. This, a double squint, far from representing a restricted view of the world, opens up the view of the church for the person in charge of the service. This squint is for the use of the clergy, no one else in the church has a view of both altars: the person in power has a total view but everyone else only has access to partial information about what is taking place and has to follow the service on trust².

Power relationships are a theme that threads through this project.



The double squint, the parish church of St Mary and St Michael, Stoke Charity.

Only from this position can the Saxon and Norman architecture be experienced separately but at the same time and, if you let your eyes cross, they merge into one image which is neither one nor the other but a different place. The church is tiny and now somewhat isolated as the old manor house and closest cottages were abandoned centuries ago and big new ones were built at some distance from the church but their previous occupants are still visible in their memorials on the floor and in the walls. The most powerful and wealthiest cannot be ignored as their tombs half fill the Saxon chancel. Now it seems silent and in this silence I feel the weight of centuries of Christian power exerted in exactly this place.

From this emerged a project which involved gathering responses from 42 people (simply the number who were able to visit in the time scale of the project) to their own visits to the church. An important element common to many of these responses was the extent to which their personal histories informed and influenced the intensity of their view of both the location and its affect. These intensities reflected at one extreme the warmth of family churchgoing traditions and history and, at the other, a deep-seated mistrust of institutional power. The literal imagery of the conflicting views through the double squint provided a metaphor that I continued to develop in further work: the intensity of affect emanating from a merging of conflicting views.

In the tiny church the physical conflicting views through the double squint were of different historical periods. This research project takes the opportunity to look more deeply into the affects brought into play by conflicting historical perspectives, and their implications for developing art works.

The metaphor of the double squint and the affects it engenders thread throughout this current project: in each work the observer is seeing two views (at least). These views do not depend on the eyes to bring them together, that is already done, but they do depend on the observer's intellectual, social and perhaps emotional experience to respond to the already combined images. The metaphor is there in each chapter: in relation to responses to places, as the threshold between two different experiences and, most of all, in the questions asked about power and relationships. It is there in *Body and soul* and *Still small voice* where the two views are brought together and superimposed one on the other. It is there in *I don't have much news* where the view of the outside world diminishes through the ever-decreasing screen.

Now imagine a very different church. The architectural simplicity of the earlier Saxon and Norman building in Stoke Charity has been superseded by gothic splendour and architectural virtuosity. The congregation has similarly changed: the church is around the corner from the Sorbonne and the abbey of Cluny, so academics and intellectual clerics will join the artisans and tradespeople of the historic Parisian *arrondissement*. Far from views being restricted by the internal walls of the small ancient building of Stoke Charity and dependent on the double squint to allow visual access to the two altars, St Etienne du Mont was conceived to be light, open and providing a vista reaching towards heaven, its architectural scale and complexities creating awe and wonder in the correspondingly tiny believers attending mass. Here even the ornate stairs of the vast, imposing pulpit speak of power. As Anthony Trollope said, "*No one but a preaching clergyman.... Has the power to compel an audience to sit silent and be tormented*" (Trollope, 1847, p. 59). There is no doubt here where the power lies.



St Etienne du Mont, Paris

The same expectations of deference to the speaker, though not necessarily the silence, would be clear in the Sala Gimbernat, the sumptuous anatomy theatre in Barcelona, which, combined with an old operating theatre in London, provides the inspiration for a second installation. As the contrasting churches come together in a lecture theatre in *Still small voice*, so the opulent Catalan medical professors' teaching space contrasts with the simplicity of the operating theatre at the old St Thomas' hospital in London and coincide through their installation in other lecture theatres.

The third installation poses the same questions in a very different way. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21 during the development of this project provided inspiration for a piece of work that made a detour away from responding in terms of scale and historical depth but brought the focus inside the home, effectively zooming in on a very personal response to the questions below. The locus of power is not visible but strongly implied and the manner of bringing the contrasting places together aims at reflecting the constraints in place at that particular point in time.

b. Aims and objectives/ rationale/ methodology

The aim of this project is to gain new knowledge of how place-specific affect can be used as an element in audio-visual installations. This questions the meaning and manifestation of affect and its relationship to the potential elements of such an installation. The project concentrates on the specific use of place and is to be evidenced through three separate installations in which contrasting places are combined to create a different place with its own affect.

In order to achieve this, I review definitions of affect and describe with reference to relevant artists the definition that corresponds most clearly with that which is likely to develop in these installations.

This definition relates affect to places, so I consider how place itself is defined and responded to by a range of artists, why particular places are deemed to have intrinsic qualities that create particular affects or cause affective responses in visitors or viewers. I consider the notion of place, its history, its importance to the human need for home and to belong, and how such people as architects and town planners attempt to create affect in their developments.

As is clear from the descriptions of churches and old medical theatres in the scenes above, a substantial part of the material to be used in the installations uses sites that are historical or have historical connotations. Through writers and artists, I consider not only the places themselves but seek an understanding of the locus of power and balance of relationships they reference.

Boundaries and thresholds are implicit in the definition of a place and become material, often literally as frames, in the audio-visual installations. These are discussed with reference to power as above, but also as practical choices made by artists, including architects and film-makers, to create particular affects.

As a final element in developing an understanding of affect I consider the role of sound (and silence) in creating affect and how artists can use sound in their work. As a comparatively recent invention, I consider how recorded sound can be used to enhance or disrupt affect, especially in the context of bringing contrasting elements together in this project.

Therefore, in the three pieces of work in this project, the places are chosen specifically because they all ask questions about power and relationships, such as the deep-seated institutional power of the Church as mentioned above or the power of knowledge and science in the work on the medical theatres, and individual power and the extent to which different strata in society are able to exert it as in the work based in the home. They question the meaning of home and belonging, its boundaries and thresholds, in terms of the historical and cultural freight an individual may carry as, whether defined simply as the context of the dwelling or more widely as the society in which one lives, and finally architecture, both public and domestic, its physicality and power to influence responses.

Often responses to these notions are formed through the experiences and expectations passed on, whether consciously or subconsciously, by people's families and through their own experiences, so they are likely to bring these to their responses to the work and the questions asked. It is in the interface between the place and these responses that I look for an intensity of affect. The notion of affect is key to this research project and how it manifests itself will be discussed at each point in the project's development.

For this PhD research study, I use a practice-based research methodology where I explore new ideas and knowledge through the making of the artwork, accompanied by an interwoven discussion of relevant theory that subsumes a separate literature review so that the art object is developed and theorised through a '*reflexive process*' (Barrett, 2012, p.6). The works discussed continue to evolve throughout and beyond the confines of this academic process.

This project consists of three scenarios presented through five audio-visual installations which are constructed using several elements of equal importance: a selection of video and photograph footage, an audio track and, crucially, the site chosen for the installation.

The videos themselves do not represent the seat of the art; this comes into being where the elements of the installation are overlaid in the mind of the engaged viewer, who may bring other experience and imagination to bear: an elusive aspect of cognition, and a moment of perception and of affect, which we may consider the seat of the art. Victor Burgin (Bishop and Manghani, 2016, p. 103) called this the 'kernel of affect' – which he regards as an unknowable, uninterpretable element and which he likened to a locked room at the centre of the work and on which the work depends.

For each work I have accumulated audio-visual recordings of specific spaces along with site-specific research, with the aim of creating audio-visual installations of the material in another space. This other space is often of a contrasting historical or geographical period or place, amalgamating images of historic spaces with ones of the early twenty first century.

For the sake of this project the modern space in each installation is one of the lecture theatres at Winchester School of Art, each chosen for the suitability of its own affect to be the site of the specific installation. Although the third installation focusses on limited space within a space, questioning the meaning of immersion within time rather than distinct periods of time, it is also projected once in a lecture theatre and a second time in an empty office on campus. (The affects of these contrasting sites are discussed in the chapter specifically about this installation.) From this a practice has emerged which superimposes images of one place onto another or otherwise integrates the two places in order to create a dislocation in which the visitors' expectation of each place is disturbed, as if they had entered a different, unfamiliar place. I regard this third, virtual, place as the location of the work. This is in terms of a dislocation created by the work and experienced by the viewer and as the object that the work is addressing.

This project explores how, or whether, through this dislocation, the affects associated with the original, actual places interact in the space of the work to produce other affects. These affects depend partly upon the dislocation of both places and upon the production of a place which is simultaneously neither place and both places. Through this I seek to question the location of art as a conceptual or virtual space and the extent to which my practice is extending ideas of site-specificity,

temporality and, particularly, affect in contemporary art. For example, *Still small voice* introduces images and sounds from a church into a modern lecture theatre. This conflates some similarities (e.g. the knowledge and power of the priest in the pulpit/professor on the dais imparting this knowledge to the subordinate congregation/audience) with some strong contrasts (e.g. age of the places, history and architectural priorities). Much of this would probably be to some extent felt and understood by most people entering the space. It is not new that artists use historical subjects inserted into a given context to draw attention to something specific non-sequentially but through juxtaposition and simultaneity. For example, Cornelia Parker's *Transitional Object (Psychobarn)* (2016), as discussed further in the chapter on place, is already a combination of different places but draws further attention to this through the contrast with the place of its installation: the Royal Academy Annenberg Courtyard in London, and previously in the roof garden of the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan for which it had been commissioned. This current project is very similar in that it emphasises the strength of the contrast between the places. In this practice the subject is not inserted into a museum, gallery or public space, but another type of place so that both elements contribute more equally to the resulting work.

c. Originality, new contribution

As described above, this project consists of three audio-visual installations which are constructed using several elements of equal importance to the final installation. The seat of the art is to be found in the combined contributions of each element to the whole, the viewer being one of these elements. Within each installation there are images of interior spaces with historical and social connotations. The locations in which they are installed also have historical and social connotations but are in contrast to the sites in the images. Visitors enter the site to be immersed in the dislocating affects of the combined places: their entry into the space brings further changes to the affect through the experiences they bring and thus complete the work.

The work and focus of this project fit therefore within the contexts of contemporary site-specific art and audio-visual installation, focussing particularly on the resulting effect of bringing together the affects of contrasting places to create a different place with an affect of its own. Usually, this resulting space can literally be entered, this immersion is an integral part of the work and an important element in terms of experiencing the affect.

The term *site-specific* usually refers to work that is made as an intentional intervention into a space that is not necessarily a gallery, though such works as those commissioned for the Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern are clearly site-specific, the Turbine Hall being the site of the intervention. This intervention may be simply to create an iteration of a work to be sympathetic to the physicality of the space, as when Haroon Mirza uses the architecture of a deconsecrated chapel in North London³ to decide the positions of lights and sounds. More usually it is in response to such considerations as the historical and social context of the space/place, such as Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993), literally based on the last house due for demolition in an area of East London, or Jeremy Deller's re-enactment of the *Battle of Orgreave* (2001) on the same site and with many of the same participants from both sides as in the original confrontation between the miners and the police in 1984. In both these works the site and the work are the same: they are using the history and context to ask new questions about the already existing site, not a different place.

The works in this research project are very clearly site-specific as the sites/places are the materials of the work and therefore key to its development, but the aim is to disturb the visitors' experience of either place by making each place an actor in the newly created work.

Although the term *audio-visual installation* is likely in practice to be synonymous with *video installation*, the first term emphasises the equal value of the visual and the aural in the installation. Understanding this balance is integral to the works in this project as the sounds in *Still small voice* and *I don't have much news* or the near silence in *Body and Soul*, have an important role in creating the intended affect of dislocation and are the actual soundtracks to the video in all three works. Christian Marclay's and Jane and Louise Wilson's work as described below also always treat sound as at least equal to the visual component and, although Marclay's *Pub Crawl* does not rely on a second site, it does rely on the presence of visitors to create the shadows that complete the work.

Video installations are regularly multiscreen, often immersive and/or interactive and do not necessarily use the site of the installation as an integral part of the work. In Christian Marclay's *Pub Crawl* (2014) for example, visitors who walk between a series of monitors add the shadows of their own legs to the pictures where the cameras were looking down to the kerb and, by so doing, populate the images. This installation would be equally effective anywhere that could be adapted to screen it.

Many video installations are, in the same way as any landscape painting, about a specific site: Jane and Louise Wilson's work has always referenced very specific sites in their video installations, such as the abandoned headquarters of the East German secret police in *Stasi City* (1997), but it is only in their more recent work that the site of the installation has been specifically cross referenced to the work – *Suspended Island* (2018), which was installed in a yard behind Trinity House, Newcastle, and used footage relevant to seafaring. This installation work comprises two free standing videos which are screened inside the space. In dimensions they are inferior to the space, being contained within it on a scale enabling them to be seen by people circulating within the space: they are not integrated into it, are not equal partners with it but different entities.

In this current research project, I have attempted to ensure that the space of the installation and that of the images are balanced so that both contribute as equally as possible to creating the resulting new space. This space, the seat of the art, is dependent on the combination of these specific locations for its existence (albeit virtual) and would obviously not elicit the same responses if one element was changed.

Bringing together two different places is not new, any exhibited artwork representing or referencing a place brings two places together – the place in the work and the exhibition site as shown above in all the works cited. A difference in this project lies in the balance of the relationship between the two contrasting elements which are then overlaid or integrated to be neither one site nor the other but a third site reminiscent of the effect of the double squint which started this project.

Except for *I don't have much news*, the piece inspired (and constrained) by the 2020-21 pandemic and which is based in the home, I have chosen places which would have a resonance through both their historical connotations and my social experience and would not necessarily, as in the home, bring with them a sense of intimacy and belonging. Theatres have existed for millennia. Designed to provide entertainment or disseminate knowledge (or both in the case of anatomy theatres), they have provided a platform for the powerful to exert their influence over others. The latter has also been true of churches and the modern lecture theatre which still reflect the hierarchy in which the person in the pulpit or at the lectern has the power of superior knowledge or status over the congregation or audience.

In a period in which the effects of my white, European history are being questioned, the works in this project ask questions about the locus of power and individual freedom within my own community. This is seen particularly in the work based in the home during the pandemic.

Visitors to these installations are highly likely to bring their own personal responses to add, whether consciously or not, to those already integral to the sites, depending perhaps on their childhood experiences of relationships, home, school and religion. This could further enhance the development and intensity of the affect generated through the work. Through this choice of places and media I question the location of art as a conceptual or virtual space and the extent to which my practice is extending ideas of site-specificity, temporality and, particularly, affect in contemporary art.

This research project is based on new work through which I hope to gain fresh insights into the understanding of affect and location in contemporary audio-visual installations. This is created through integrating contrasting locations with contrasting affects to increase their intensity as the use of contrasting colours in a painting would bring the elements into sharper relief. Thus, notions of affect and location are extended in the work through *intensity* of affect and *dislocation*.

This project will be of interest to artists and researchers working on site specific projects in developing closer connections with the affects of their chosen sites. It will also contribute to a new look at elements of my socio-historical background.

Part 1: the context

This first part reviews writers and artists whose thinking and artworks have contributed to my thinking in the development of this project. The second part focuses on the development of the practice and the audio-visual installations that represent it. The project began, as described above, from the inspiration resulting from the contrasting affects of the two churches and developed as described in the methodology: the research and practice move forward side by side. Neither would exist in their current form without the other but aim at mutual enhancement.

For the purpose of this research project, this first part is divided into five chapters, in each of which literature and artists' work is reviewed from a different perspective in order to have a greater understanding of the different concepts addressed by the artworks in the project. The first chapter works towards a definition of affect in relation to the project itself, then separate chapters concentrate on affect related to place, frames/thresholds, sound and power/relationships. All are related to affect as this is the key concept in the project.

There are substantial overlaps between these chapters as choices made in one area have an effect on the others and each is in the context of the others. Within each chapter relevant theoretical thinking is discussed along with artists whose work exemplifies this thinking and/or has influenced my work. Different subjects discussed in the writing of some thinkers, such as Michel Foucault, and the work of some artists, such as Christian Marclay, will be considered in different ways in several chapters as elements of their work have been influential across all three of my works in this project. There will also be leakage from this chapter into the later chapters outlining the three works in this project when a specific art work or piece of writing is particularly pertinent to that material.

1. Affect as defined in my practice

In this chapter I describe how affect is defined by psychologists, philosophers, architects and artists and how their thinking relates to the works in this project. These definitions range from affect being a spontaneous human reaction to the unexpected to it emanating naturally from the inanimate. I conclude that there is something of all these in this project because of my choice of places used in the works. Each place chosen brings with it a history (through its age or its connotations) that relates to my personal experiences and, by introducing two contrasting places, there is a disjunction that hopefully creates an unexpected response.

The concept of affect is defined differently by, broadly grouped, psychologists, architects, philosophers or socio-geographers. Each of these groups' interpretation of affect has relevance to my practice: some locate affect in the personal response of the viewer, and some in the places themselves. In the first group, the definition relates to visitors, who are immersed in the installation and whose responses reflect the potential affect of the manipulated space based on the individual's own experiences. In the second, the definition relates more particularly to my choices of places for the work. In this chapter the emphasis is on how places contribute to a definition of affect; the next chapter is primarily concerned with the specificity of place.

The definition of affect used by psychologists resides in outcomes: their definition describes response rather than intent. For psychologists affect is the instinctive reaction to an external stimulus. A person who habitually doesn't react physically and emotionally when they hear sad news, for example, would be seen as lacking 'affect.' It is the process of instinctively linking the emotional and the physical, the ability to show feeling. Psychologist Silvan S. Tomkins distinguishes seven primary affects and their responses shown in facial expressions and physiological changes, e.g. 5. *Fear -Terror: eyes frozen open, pale, cold, sweaty, facial trembling, with hair erect.* He goes on to say, "A world experienced without any affect would be a pallid, meaningless world. We would know that things happened but would not care whether they did or not" (Tomkins, 1995, p.220).

This definition of affect as a physical response is also reflected and taken further in the notion of embodied affect. Tomkins's descriptions tell us what he thinks emotions look like

through the body's responses, without looking at the reasons for these responses and why they may not be the same in different people. The German psychologists Thomas Fuchs and Sabine C. Koch suggest that *"we[should] regard emotions as resulting from the circular interaction between affective qualities or affordances in the environment and the body's subjective resonance, be it in the form of sensations, postures, expressive movements or movement tendencies. Motion and emotion are thus intrinsically connected. Through its resonance, the body functions as a medium of emotional perception: it colors or charges self-experience and the environment with affective valences while it remains itself in the background of one's own awareness"* (Fuchs and Koch, 2014).

This definition is the most apposite in relation to this project: a circular interaction involving the qualities of the individual elements of each installation and the subjective responses of each individual viewer. Each element and each person bring its own affect to create a new experience. Embodied affect has interested writers of film theory in terms of directors' intent, the horror genre being an unsophisticated example as these films aim at eliciting strong affective and physical responses in their audience.

There are many writings about similar emotional responses to works of art: James Elkins, in exploring why people might be moved to tears by some paintings, uses a Leonardo drawing⁴ in the National Gallery as an example: he finds it very moving but concludes that its position in a quiet room by itself is as important in eliciting this response as its particular qualities as an artwork: *"The National Gallery's room is reminiscent of a small chapel"* (Elkins 2001, p. 142). On describing an emotional response to a drawing, Elkins discusses the affect produced by the space in which it is hanging, paying particular attention to effects of darkness and silence and the intimation of the sacred. In effect he is bringing the two elements together to create an affect in exactly the same manner as this project. Furthermore, this example is particularly pertinent in connection to my choice of sites, especially the small church that initiated the series of works: it reinforces the idea that affect is enhanced by the specific combination and scale of elements contributing to the work.

Elkins' response was emotional, a physical response to the affect created by the scenario in which he found himself. For others, however, affect resides in the material, the building, the place, a less

anthropocentric perspective. At the furthest end of the spectrum is the political theorist, Jane Bennett, who posits a theory of “*vibrant materiality*”, “*an affect intrinsic to forms that cannot be imagined as human*” (Bennett 2010, p.xi) and suggests that we should be “*willing and able to enter into productive assemblages with [these forms]*” (Bennett, 2001, p.131). Bennett’s theory is in support of a different way of understanding the environment, where literally every thing has agency and humanity does not have primacy. As we shall see when discussing the sublime later, man’s powerlessness in the face of natural phenomena exemplifies this theory.

Philosopher Brian Massumi starts his thinking from the psychologists’ definition: “*Affect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion..... but emotion and affect – if affect is intensity - follow different logics and different orders*” (Massumi, 2002, p.27). Another philosopher, Steven Shaviro uses Massumi’s definition of the difference between the two terms as the basis of his discussion of affect in the film experience of a twenty-first century viewer: “*affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified, and intensive; whilst emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified, and meaningful, a “content” that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject. Emotion is affect captured by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject. Subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they have or possess emotions*” (Shaviro, 2010, p.3).

Massumi goes on to discuss how he comes to the choice of the word *intensity* to define affect. He refers back to Spinoza and Deleuze who had both construed a paradox in which there is a folding together of conscious reflection, an affect and the idea of the affect: a third state, not quite outside experience but immanent to it. This immanence heightens the possibility of response and so creates an extra intensity which is affect. This intensity

“is a state of suspense, potentially of disruption. It’s like a temporal sink, a hole in time, as we conceive of it and narrativize it. It is not exactly passivity, because it is filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonance. And it is not yet activity, because the motion is not of the kind that can be directed (if only symbolically) toward practical ends in a world of constituted objects and aims (if only on screen)” (Massumi, 2002, p.27).

The concept that affect is a state that is not quite outside experience but immanent to it moves us along the spectrum of definitions towards that used by architects such as Kraftl and Adey. Their

article entitled *Architecture/Affect/Inhabitation: Geographies of Being-In Buildings*, making affect the element which transforms an idea into a lived-in environment, takes the examples of a pre-school building in Wales and the Prayer Room at Liverpool Airport to discuss the intentional creation of affects. As something to be borne in mind when creating a new building, they talk of the composition of affect as “*the operation of moral geographies of childhood at the school, and of ‘quiet’ at the Prayer Room*”, which “*remind us that the creation and experience of affect is highly politicised, but that that process does not exist as a purely ideal, nonrepresentational mechanism, or a perfect actualisation of the virtual*” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008, p. 226). The creation of an affect has already been manipulated by those involved in the design and implementation of the space and is not only what the experience of the visitor brings to bear on it. Even so, their quotation as a sub-heading to their article is equally apposite: “*Attending to and through questions of affect allows encounters with spaces of practice to have a life and force before and beyond the deliberate and reflective consistencies of representational thinking*”.

The viewers’ experience, expectation or understanding of a certain place or examples of a type of place will seem to precede them and be reflected in the affect of the place.

In contrast, Gaston Bachelard reflected ideas of affect in his poetic explorations of specific spaces such as areas of the home and, like Proust’s madeleine in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the effect objects have in triggering memory, which becomes the basis of affect. Bachelard’s writing addresses the ability of the human to create immensity in the intimate (as opposed to the response to public spaces described above): “*the mind sees and continues to see objects, while the spirit finds the nest of immensity in an object*” (Bachelard, 1958, p. 190). His theory, based on his own experiences, is that, “*in the intimate space of our home, or our room, or a shell, thoughts trigger memories which in themselves trigger day dreams which expand exponentially*”. This is particularly relevant to the affect in *I don’t have much news* where memories of the outside world are filtered through the limited focus of the television screen. Also, in the space of the library archives or the lecture theatre where memories grow to fill the spaces in between the real and the imaginary, affect is formed.

Old churches and historic medical theatres are freighted with history and emotion in just the way Juhani Pallasmaa, the Finnish architect and theorist, describes the elements of architectural space

that create affect, e.g. *“natural materials... allow our vision to penetrate their surfaces.....[they] express their age and history as well as the story of their origins and their history of human use.....the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction”* (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 31).

The artist, Ilya Kabakov, writing in 2003 about understanding the spirit of places in which or about which he creates installations, describes exactly what I am looking for in my work.

First he acknowledges the *“numerous cultural ‘layers’ that concentrate the very place itself ...where one image is layered on another when we find ourselves in this place”*. Churches and medical theatres may literally have a history that *“is etched in stone or steel, in something hard and sturdy”* as the building has developed over time, but, much more than this, there are the layers of the memories that these places evoke, *“that very activation of the memory, which is what creates that multi-layered and multi-voiced resonance”*. Kabakov refers to this as each building’s *“aura”*, something beyond its tangible and visible materiality. It brings something that you can neither touch nor see but which nonetheless exists. Kabakov goes as far as to describe this *“unique ‘airy medium”*, as

“something spiritual, an atmospheric network that is concentrated in this place. It encompasses not only what we see, but also what we do not see, primarily the intervals, the voids, the spaces between objects. ..after all, the meaning of the intervals, the voids, is no less important than the significance of the objects between which the emptiness is located” (Kabakov, 2003, p.401-407).

If each place possesses this atmospheric network that I call affect, what would result from bringing together two (or more) places? What new network would be created? This is the core of my research project and, although Kabakov’s ideas can be quite directly applied to my choice of places in the two historically based works, the subtle notions, *“the intervals, the voids, the spaces between objects”* come more prominently into play in the domestic scene in the home-based work where the simplicity of the activity belies potential layers of affect in what is absent. Kabakov’s 1985 work *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment* is discussed later in the chapter on *I don’t have much news*.

Among theorists associated with attempts to define this notion of a spirit or sense of place, Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre were particularly concerned with the political and social implications of

urban development in the 1960s and 1970s and discuss not specific places but social spaces (which may be places of worship, libraries, etc. or parks and other communal areas). Foucault's interest is in the idea that the space in which we live is not a void but "*a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another*" (Foucault, 1967, p.3). This can describe sites of transportation, sites of leisure, sites of rest, but there are some sites that do not conform to the sets of relations that define the previous list: these he calls utopias and heterotopias (Foucault, 1967), which will be discussed in the chapter on place.

Foucault's thinking is a thread like the concept of the double squint that runs through this project: as the double squint linking two places in an impossible view creates a heterotopia, his thinking later about Velasquez' *Las Meninas* (Foucault, 1970) not only exemplifies this (though he doesn't actually make that connection) but also links with the definition of place, the siting of the locus of power in all the works in this project and with the presence or absence of the body specifically in the life drawing room or theatre. These links are discussed in more detail in the relevant chapters.

Returning to a definition of affect as the spirit of a place, Lefebvre's relevance lies in his descriptions of how social spaces have developed, a triad of the perceived, conceived and lived, and how they interact with each other: he describes space as an abstraction that gains its existence "*by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships.....Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves on one another. They are not things, which have mutually limiting boundaries*" (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 86). He continues:

"...beyond each opaque form, 'one' seeks to apprehend something else. This tends to turn social space into a transparent medium occupied by light, by 'presences' and influences.....space contains opacities, bodies and objects, centres of efferent actions and effervescent energies, hidden – even impenetrable – places, areas of viscosity, and black holes.....objects touch each other, feel, smell and hear one another. Then they contemplate one another with eye and gaze" (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 183).

Taking Lefebvre's metaphorical imagery literally, in projecting transparent images and sounds of one space onto the opaque structure of a second space I try to highlight the potential of a new mixture of presences and the intensities that this will create. By choosing places such as churches and

historical medical theatres I am defining a specific intent: this affect includes “opacities” of fear, uncertainty, awe, a search for answers to impossible questions, all within the architectural and material beauty of the places. This affect reflects the notion of the sublime.

Although affect is not the same thing as the sublime, I make a connection to Immanuel Kant’s definition of the latter as *a vibration*, (Kant, (1764) trans. Fierson and Guyer (2011) p.258) reflected later by Massumi in the idea of intensity, likening this vibration to a rapidly alternating repulsion from and attraction to one and the same object, and some of the nineteenth century Northern European Romantic interpretations of the sublime in art and architecture are apposite in my choice of places: artists such as J.M.W. Turner and Caspar David Friedrich painted scenes of turbulent oceans or vast panoramas of the Scottish Highlands or Swiss Alps that inspired in their audience awe and a sense of something beyond beauty in the vastness of the chosen place. Churches, particularly the lofty structures whose architects aimed at giving the impression of reaching to the heavens and dwarfing the mere human, create feelings of awe and other emotions reflecting the individual’s experience.

Sigurd Bergmann, writing about theology and the built environment, discusses the spiritual nature of church architecture particularly through the height of the buildings and the use of light and shade. He describes the height of the facades and the rows of columns drawing the visitor forward towards the altar consciously designed to create an eschatological feeling of awe. Bergmann’s views are further discussed in the chapter on frames and thresholds.

My choice of locations consciously questions not just the history felt in the materiality of the place but the potential for experiencing awe and wonder, perhaps fear, but definitely some unease in the folding together of the affects of the two places. This will be discussed further in the chapters devoted to each work in the project.

Discussion of the sublime specifically in art revolved to a great extent around such painters as Friedrich, moving on to Turner and then being revived by the American art historian Robert Rosenblum, as *The Abstract Sublime* in 1961 in relation to Abstract Expressionism. From these writers it is difficult to conceive of encountering the sublime in depiction of anything less than the vastness of either a mountain view or the forces of nature. These however remain simply a depiction of vastness, reduced to a canvas. The real scale of a gothic church would perhaps provide an

experience of vastness beyond anything else in the life of a local congregation. I believe, however, that experience of the sublime is not related simply to the scale of the environment but to a quality the experience evokes: it is possible to reference the sublime and create the potential to experience it through more subtle juxtapositions of affect in contemporary installations. For example, a simple voice singing a hymn and the projected architecture of the church in *Still small voice*: the sublime resides in what these evoke.

Where visitors, whether believers or not, feel small and insignificant when contemplating the wonders of an immense church and their responses of awe and wonder may be described as sublime, those in the operating and anatomy theatres encounter the sublime very differently. For them, they are active witnesses of the blood and pain in the operating theatre, the complete subjection of the suffering patient to indignities, terror and invasion of privacy and the macabre spectacle of the display of internal organs during dissection. The contrast between the abject bodies and the uncovering of the wonders of the human body in *Body and soul*, these contrasts can also evoke the sublime. As Julia Kristeva affirms '*The abject is bordered by the sublime. It is not the same moment of its trajectory, but it is the same subject and the same discourse which enable both abject and sublime to exist*' (Kristeva, 1982, p.133). For her, understanding the abject is about the corpse: "*The corpse - seen without God and outside science - is the height of abjection.*" (Kristeva, 1982, p.127).

In none of the discussions above on what might be sublime is there any mention of sound. In fact, Edmond Burke, in his 1790 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, specifically placed music (such as hymns) under the definition of beauty rather than the sublime. He does, however, include sounds, especially loud and sudden ones, in the production of experiences of the sublime: "*the noise of vast cataracts, raging storms.....shouting of multitudes....a sudden beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force...the striking of a great clock when the silence of the night prevents the attention from being too much dissipated*" (Burke, 1790, p.82-83). The importance of sound, and silence, in contributing to both affect and dislocation in the works in this project are discussed fully in the later chapter on sound, especially with reference to *Body and soul* where the noise described by contemporaries in the operating theatre is very noticeably missing, leaving the imagination and personal experiences of the viewer to add this extra dimension.

I don't have much news, which was developed during the pandemic, stands in stark contrast to the two others. Although its components have historical and social connotations as in the other works, it is on a completely different scale both literally and metaphorically. As I, like many others, turned in on myself, so the work was similarly confined and the places of the video footage and of its installation become different iterations of each other. This focusses on the affects of relationships, touching on existentialism and the location of power when other dimensions are restricted in scale. To a great extent time replaces space as a dimension in this work. Even so, the installation and projection of this video footage in both a large lecture theatre and a small office put the work on the same footing as the others; in each place a contrast between two sites creates a dislocation that distorts and therefore questions the balance of scale between the site and the projected video footage.

In conclusion, affect in relation particularly to two works in this project pertains to elements of all the above. The audio-visual elements of *Still small voice* and *Body and soul* are based on historical sites that show the marks of centuries of human interaction and examples of them will be known, heard of through family histories and probably experienced in their modern form by most visitors or viewers. This is Bennett's "*vibrant materiality*" and Massumi's "*intensity*" of places freighted with history in the ancient materials used in their construction and in the generations of memories they evoke. It continues through Bergmann's awe-inspiring monumentality of the architecture and the political and power- infused intentionality of the construction of both church and anatomy theatre to create Kabakov's specific spirit of place and it ends with the potential physical response on entering the space of each work brought about by the personal history and experience of the visitor.

The second element of each work, which is always a modern structure, asks whether a similar intensity is experienced where the history and experience of two places are not congruent and they clash, as in the lecture theatres providing the sites of the installations. The materials and architecture of the lecture theatres do not carry the freight of history as the historic buildings above although their purpose carries connotations of centuries of knowledge and power. In these works my interest is in what happens to their affect when the two places are conflated.

I don't have much news, in which the two elements reflect less overtly ideas of history and power,

provides a counterpoint to the others. The scale and range are very different in the domestic and personal scene. However, the questions about affect remain the same: history, connotations, particularly in relation to an understanding of “home”, personal space and personal experience, all contribute to the place in which the scene takes place, thus creating its own intensity.

2. Place and affect: location and dislocation

In this chapter I describe the different definitions of what constitutes a place. As definitions of affect above are different depending on the expertise of the writer, a place has a different meaning to an archaeologist, an architect, an artist or a philosopher. For most of these, however, the definition of place is linked to notions of home, of belonging and therefore to history and to memory. A place is not necessarily within a precise boundary but is more where networks of threads of history and social experience develop. Their affects are built on these networks and these definitions of place are totally congruent to my intentions in the specific sites in this project.

Most of the definitions of affect discussed in the chapter above are in relation to place, either specifically located in a place or in a visitor's response to a place. In this chapter I deal more precisely with what actually constitutes a place. In the course of my work, place, space and location sometimes are synonymous and each can be exchanged for another in the descriptions or discussions, but, when we look more closely at the constituting elements of the work, the precise definitions of the words become clear. Specific *places* provide the inspiration for the works, videos are of the interiors of these *places* and they are installed in interior *spaces* of other specific *places*. This interior *space* forms the *location* of the art.

As we have seen in the chapter on affect, Bachelard considered this in terms of the more intimate notion of home, reflecting ideas of affect in his poetic explorations of specific spaces such as areas of the home and addressing the ability of the human to create immensity in the intimate. His theory is that in our home thoughts trigger memories which expand exponentially. This is particularly pertinent to *I don't have much news*, which is based entirely in a home, looking outwards through the television screen to trigger memories or day dreams during a period of enforced confinement.

Moving on from the notion of the intimacy of home, the American art historian and activist, Lucy Lippard addresses the wider idea of belonging, being part of a social group, family or tribe, a community. She discusses issues of the narratives of community, land use, perceptions of nature and landscape, but above all the combination of any or all of these to create a sense of place. Like Lefebvre, Lippard discusses the urbanisation and isolation of new towns, though in the USA instead

of Europe and specifically from a feminist and/or native American and/or immigrant perspective, and the ways in which each has developed its own reality as a community: "*All places exist somewhere between the inside and the outside view of them, the ways in which they compare to, and contrast with, other places. A sense of place is a virtual immersion that depends on lived experience and a topographical intimacy*" (Lippard, 1998, p.33). To develop a sense of place takes time, not only the time in which the place has existed but also the experiences brought to it by its inhabitants.

Lippard (1998, p.33) quotes the Chinese-American geographer Yi-fu Tuan's comment that "*the terrain of late childhood seems to penetrate our lives and memories most intensely*"⁵, a statement that reverberates strongly in how people respond, not only to where they live, but more specifically to such places as churches and lecture or medical theatres. If people's experience of religion as children was positive they seem likely to experience different emotions on entering a church later in life from those who were exposed to a neutral or negative experience: the responses to visits to Stoke Charity provide some evidence of this. Similarly, experience of school or illness may colour their responses to such settings in later life. This is an important factor in my choice of places.

I have already touched on the thinking of Foucault in terms of the development of social spaces through their history and the people who live and work in them, creating together a common sense of place. Foucault's interest, as quoted earlier, is in the idea that the spaces in which we live are the set of relations that define a site but cannot be reduced or superimposed on each other. He continued to describe utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are soon explained as imaginary places created to represent the perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs and conditions. Utopias do not exist.

Heterotopias, however, do exist but as sites that contradict the conditions of other sites. In each case one site contradicts the affect of the other site without being totally disconnected to it. Foucault gives the mirror as such a site: in it one exists but not in the place where one actually exists. A cemetery, the place of the living and the dead, a library, the place of books and imagination, or a church, the place of the human and the divine, these are also heterotopias. A heterotopia is when one is not in one place nor another but has the potential to experience multiple places at

once in the same physical space. Furthermore, it distorts the conventional experience of time, e.g., according to Foucault, in libraries and museums time accumulates, in festivals and fairgrounds it is fleeting.

Although Foucault himself does not specifically link the two, in his writing about Velasquez' 1656 painting, *Las Meninas*, he seems to be describing exactly the criteria for a heterotopia in the complex combinations of presence and absence, of reflection and representation, in the painting. Another French philosopher, Hubert Damisch, took issue with Foucault's interpretation of the focus and perspectives of the painting but agreed that

“the scene he [Velasquez] describes sustains itself, in its scenic existence, only by means of the references it imposes to another scene, facing it and thus invisible.....the consequences being, between these facing scenes, an unending series of relays or dodges, as a result of which the spectator is simultaneously implicated in the painting and excluded from the circuit of representation, or rather conducted to its back” (Damisch, 1994, p. 427).

The two paintings – the one represented and the one actually painted- come together in much the same way as the two sites are combined in the works in this project. Discussion of Velasquez' frames within frames will continue in the chapter relating to frames and thresholds.



Las Meninas 1656 Madrid, Prado

These are the points at which I can relate Foucault's thinking to my work but disagree with it when he states that, although there may be multiple layers creating the affect of a place, this place and another are "*absolutely not superimposable on one another*". I feel, and this research project is concerned with this superimposition, that the layering of images of one place in another place, e.g. a church and a lecture theatre (*Still small voice*) does create a feeling of dislocation that may be described as a new space⁶. In some ways my work fulfils the criteria for a heterotopia: inside the installation the viewer experiences, for example, the framework of the lecture theatre but the virtual reality of the church, so can experience the feeling of being where they are not. However, the being where they are becomes the new experience of the virtually created space that is the result of the projected superimposition of one place onto the other.

Marc Augé discussed the creation of non-places in the design of such places as urban centres and airports:

"If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé, 1992, p.63).

In this Augé does not take into account the importance of time and human involvement in urban centres as Michel de Certeau had in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988, p.107), but airports, replicated hundreds of times across the world and where the population is endlessly transient, seem to remain aloof from relationships, history and identity. They may be heterotopias, where people bring their dreams, but these dreams pass through and don't integrate themselves into the fabric of the place.

Augé also uses the writing of the literary critic, Jean Starobinski, to help define places and non-places and, by so doing, describes what contributes to a sense of place: *'the presence of the past in a present that supersedes it but still lays claim to it'* (Augé, 1992, p.61).

Starobinski's references include the quintessential fiction of memory and place, Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927) from whose first volume, *Du côté de chez Swann*, the narrator talks of the hourly chiming of the Combray church bell punctuating the rhythm of the day and acting as a bass line on which rested *"the virtually infinite interlacing of destinies, actions, thoughts and reminiscences"* (Starobinski quoted in Augé, 1992, p.61). Church bells and clocks have a similar role in the works in this research, particularly with reference to sound and silence and are discussed in that

chapter.

In 1994, the geographer, Doreen Massey uses almost the same words as Foucault in defining place as a set of relations but plays down the role of history:

What gives place its specificity is not some long internalised history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus”.

For her, place is created by sets of coincidences:

“Instead then, thinking of places as areas with boundaries around them, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether it be a street, or a region or even a continent” (Massey, 1994, p.20).

It is interesting that the chronology of the idea of what constitutes a place has moved from Bachelard’s intimate spaces/places described in 1957, outward to Foucault’s 1967 spaces composed of networks of relationships, further outward to Lefebvre’s 1974 social space and finally to Massey’s 1994 global space, reflecting increasing globalisation.

The recent looping back to the intimate space and limited travel during the pandemic of 2020-21 is explored in *I don’t have much news*. The space in this work is not a street, a region or even a continent; it is one room in a house. At the time travel and social activities were banned except for emergencies and the wider world could only be experienced through a screen, whether in the form of phone, computer or television. Place became comparable to de Maistre’s *Voyage autour de ma chambre (Journey round my room)*”, published in 1795, in which he took the opportunity whilst under house arrest to scrutinise his immediate surroundings and describe them in the manner of travel writers of his day. From this he let his mind wander but his body had to remain in situ. His music, furniture and, particularly, pictures created his links with the outside world as our screens were to do two hundred years later.

Tacita Dean also looks at the complex networks that create a sense of place. She does this both as a theorist and as an artist, editing, with Jeremy Millar, a book dedicated to the notion of place through the work of a series of artists. In the first chapter of *Place* she directs her thinking into the understanding of what a sense of place is and how artists respond to this idea of place. In Dean's view, which reflects Massey's, place and a work of art have much in common, in that they might be said not to contain – and be contained by – boundaries, “*but rather an innumerable series of thresholds, which extend far beyond the physical limits of either the site or the art object, and across time also, remaining even when the particular place or work of art may no longer exist*” (Dean and Millar, 2005, p. 20).

A place is far more than its geographical location, in the same way as a piece of art is far more than the material from which it is made, whether tangible or virtual. It is by drawing together all these threads of history and experience that affect evolves. Dean uses different imagery to describe each of these threads: she relates more directly to the framing or edges of an artwork by referring to thresholds, evoking fluid boundaries to a clearly delineated place (or picture).

I use this thinking in relation to both the physical and metaphorical aspects of the works in this project. The spaces in which the images are projected are real buildings with literal boundaries but these are blurred by the projections of places with different structures and perspectives and new ones are created. The frames that result from decisions made about compositions in the videos themselves create new thresholds or frames when projected. This is an area I address in more detail in the chapter specifically related to frames and thresholds.

The works of Cornelia Parker and Rachel Whiteread are important in the context of place: Parker's *Transitional Object (Psychobarn)* (2016), and Whiteread's *House* (1994) exemplify definitions of space and place. Heterotopias, as described by Foucault, exist as sites that contradict the conditions of other sites; both these works do exactly that. If time is a crucial dimension of place, these both carry almost incompatible layers of time with a mixture of fragility and solidarity. Both refer to something that no longer exists, that already could no longer exist when the work was made. Whiteread's could only happen when the actual house was destroyed as it was a concrete cast of the interior of the last remaining house in a terrace in the East End of London. Curator and writer, James Lingwood (1996, pp. 65-69) describes both the piece and the polemics surrounding it, making the point that, even though it only existed for eighty days,

during that period it and three churches were the only static elements in the landscape which dwarfed them. It was solid, even monumental, yet appeared vulnerable as it lacked the protection of its outside walls. It was intimate, showing its internality, seeming to have a strong individual character, a spirit of the place, yet it symbolised destruction. Having been one unremarkable house in a road of similar buildings it suddenly seemed to have become remarkable in a space with different dimensions and no longer recognisable.

Although *House* stood in the same place as the original building, by changing its natural environment through demolition, Whiteread created a third place whose affect was quite different. Art historian, Richard Shone described *House* as “*the death mask of a particular space and a finite period of time. It was the solidification of memory, anonymous history made palpable*” (Shone, 1995, p. 52).



Rachel Whiteread *House* 1994

Parker’s *Transitional Object (Psychobarn)* (2016) is in some ways very down to earth as it is made from the wood of a traditional American red barn. The outward appearance of this work has no similarity to mine; it is a very tangible, material, solidly three-dimensional sculpture. Its similarity lies in the way in which two different buildings are brought together to make a third, the history of each shaping the physical and metaphorical structure that it actually becomes. The two separate buildings are the red barn, an American “*symbol of all that is wholesome and good*” (Parker, 2018, p.25), and the house built for Hitchcock’s horror film *Psycho* (1960), itself based on Edward Hopper’s *House by the Railroad* (1925)⁷. Together they become “*the polarities of good and evil*” (Parker, 2018,

p.27). The resulting structure is not virtual but it is clearly not meant to be a real house – though it is a real stage set, its scaffolding an integral part of the piece. Like the churches, medical and lecture theatres in my work, it carries the conflicting weights of positive and negative memories, in this case from homely red barns, a film set site of horror and a picture of loneliness and to these adds its own. It has an affect purely its own.



Cornelia Parker

Transitional Object (Psychobarn) 2016



Edward Hopper

House by the Railroad 1925

In these works by Parker, the space is impossible to grasp, its dimensions ephemeral, capturing snippets of memories that never quite form. Contrasting places and spaces sometimes in different scales with different connotations come together to create a new affect in a third, disconcerting place.

The work of the artist, Candida Höfer, is discussed at length in the later chapter on frames and thresholds because of her methods of constructing the composition of her photographs but the effect this has on my understanding of space and the view of a specific place is important here. Höfer's images are of interiors of museums, libraries, theatres, palaces:

“institutions that preserve, construct and disseminate memory, perpetuating the life of the past.....Each of the interiors Höfer captures exists in a number of socio-cultural and historical contexts simultaneously.these spaces are full of living memory: of the place and its specific artefacts, of generations and individuals, of the artist and viewer” (Sinyutina, 2015, p.10).

Although, as Nadezda Sinyutina continues, these places are full of memory, they are empty of people and other indicators of human presence. Höfer takes them beyond the boundaries of normal socio-cultural functions and creates a dislocation, *“a portrait of places that do not exist in the form in which they are captured in these photographs... by drawing us into the inaccessible, strange and private life of public spaces.”* Höfer creates spaces with their expected *raison-d’être* removed, as if they are a totally different, unreal place, thus also creating a disconcerting and completely different affect from that expected in such places.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, Höfer’s work reflects another layer of memory, a time when all public places were closed. A 2022 exhibition in Berlin⁸ elicited the following comments from arts journalist, Christian House in the Financial Times: *“The pandemic cast all interiors in a new, sometimes disturbing, light”*. He goes on to ask what places are when they have no visitors:

“Are they cautionary tales or invitations? Places of melancholia or expectation? Are they sinister, sedate or changeable? Or, perhaps, are they all of these things?”

Certainly, the absence of the public neuters an institutional building.... Even with elaborate parquet and marble pillars, the agency of pomp is weakened....In the home, however, emptiness implies something more personal. An empty home suggests a sadder story. While houses and apartments were reconfigured to the demands of remote working — folded in on themselves in a domestic origami that pitched office equipment into kitchens and bedrooms — the citadels of commerce, learning and entertainment were drained of life. Opera houses, auditoriums, galleries and library stacks were all locked up. Overnight, these revered but redundant sites became quintessential Höfer subjects, yet they remained out of reach.”
Ironically, they may have been empty, but I could not come and see them: health concerns, travel restrictions, organisational issues,” [Höfer] explains. “So I sat by my window and watched the seasons go by” (House, 2022, 19 February).

This experience is one to which many can relate. Like all the above public buildings, the art school was also closed during the pandemic, terminating, at least temporarily, the development of the works originally planned for this project, where the studios and theatres were to figure prominently.



Candida Höfer *Catherine Palace Pushkin St. Petersburg III* 2014

Haroon Mirza also chooses places such as churches for his audio-visual installations, using the architecture and acoustics of these buildings to shape his work. One part of his work in a Copenhagen church⁹ responded particularly to the venue: speakers were placed in a circle in the centre of the space, cushions encouraged visitors to sit in the circle and experience the sound whilst changing coloured neon lights emphasised the surrounding arches. In this environment there was a link with meditation and otherworldliness that would be difficult to create in a traditional gallery space. Mirza creates a new space by emphasising elements of the first – its arches, in particular – but it is with particular reference to his use of sound that memories are evoked: along with contrasting electronic sounds visitors are invited to immerse themselves in contemplation as in a church. I discuss this further in the chapter on sound.



Haroon Mirza *Dancing with the Unknown* Nicolaj

Kunsthal, Copenhagen 2018 (my image)

So, in the context of my practice, and repeating the definition of place in Candida Höfer's work, a place is a specific physical location whose scale and dimensions are less important than its existence as a social space that is "full of living memory" existing "in a number of socio-cultural and

historical contexts simultaneously” and *“perpetuating the life of the past”*. Each place in the audio-visual installations either has a history of which some elements will reverberate in the memory, experience or cultural understanding of any visitor and/or its usage has a history which triggers such reverberations. Examples of these places are all familiar to any visitor, their connotations setting up expectations of what they might experience in entering the installation. In my work specifically, contrasting places are brought together with their different histories and connotations to disturb the expectations of the viewer or visitor by creating a new third place.

3. Frames/thresholds and affect: physical and metaphorical boundaries

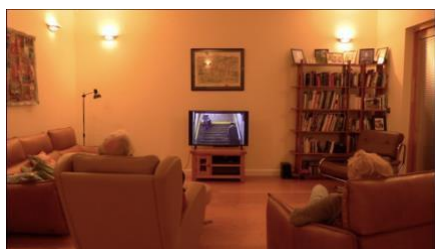
In this chapter I discuss the boundaries formed to contain the social and historical networks defining place in the previous chapter and the literal frames and thresholds of the elements of these works. This chapter is an intermediate step between the comparative fluidity of a place and the constraints imposed as described in the chapter on power and relationships below. The scale of a frame or threshold makes the difference between comfort and constraint, freedom and restraint. Mainly about the work of artists and film-makers, the chapter discusses the intent behind different framing devices and their affective result.

Scenario 1: A room in the style of the French Second Empire, though surprisingly sparsely furnished: three sofas, a table on which there is a paper knife, and a large bronze sculpture on the mantelpiece. Second Empire elaborate and reminiscent of many a faded château, but this room has no doors or windows, is not heavy with drapery, pictures and other ornaments to attract or distract the eye and mind.



Front cover image from Sartre, J.P., *Huis Clos*.¹⁰

Scenario 2: A second room, in an eclectic style bridging the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries reflecting the accretion of furnishings common to many long-established European households: two sofas, an easy chair, a coffee table, a wooden cabinet on which stands a television and a large bookcase topped with family photographs. This room also seems to have no doors, and windows are concealed behind closed blinds.



Living room in *I don't have much news*

Scenario 3: A room in New York in the nineteen thirties. Looking in through the window we see two people, a man who is reading a newspaper and a woman who is picking out a tune with one finger on a piano. It is perhaps a hotel room but with a piano? There are no personal items in the picture and the protagonists are not communicating in any way. There is a sense of listlessness, waiting for time to pass.



Edward Hopper *Room in New York* 1932¹¹

The first is Sartre's depiction of Hell in the stage set of *Huis Clos* (1944). Various translations as *No exit* or *No way Out*, *Huis Clos* actually means *in camera* as in legal proceedings taking place in private rather than in court, this is not the décor any of the three characters would have chosen for themselves.

The second is the room depicted in *I don't have much news* in which a couple spent the months of lockdown during the pandemic of 2020-21, and, although the décor is of their choosing, it is not where they would have chosen to spend so many uninterrupted months. This room, however, does have access to the outside world – through the television. It's not a door or window which would offer a physical possibility of escape, and the access is one way only (into the room) but through the small smart screen the isolation is not complete. It is like a reverse double squint: the viewer does not look through from a small place into a bigger one but into the small opening that is the screen in this particular room. However, the small screen opens up the possibilities of a view of the outside world in all its depth and width.

The third is an example of Edward Hopper's paintings.

All of these scenarios feature domestic spaces and are very tightly framed, though this framing is different according to the media in which the scene exists.

The first is framed by the proscenium arch of a theatre so it contains and separates the diegesis of the play in performance and the space that is the theatre auditorium, whilst in the second the architecture of the living space creates a similar framework. The third is an example of many of Edward Hopper's paintings where the view is into a room from outside the window. The darkness of the window frame is continued by the upright piano and grids are formed by the matching window and door and the pictures on the wall, trapping the figures in different sections of the image, thus further reinforcing the lack of communication between them. This tight framing creates a tension, the protagonists are almost imprisoned in the space as are any visitors into the scene. Hopper's work is also referenced in connection with Cornelia Parker's *Psychobarn (Transitional Object)* in the chapter on place. This is important in creating affect and is a strategy common to all the works in this project.

The spectator is also important here – as a member of the audience in the heterotopia of the theatre or the point of view from the literal position of the viewer in the gallery and the audience in the lecture theatres forming the second place in my installations. This creates a further dislocation as regards the position of the spectator in relation to the work. Is the spectator inside or outside the frame? Although it creates physical and metaphorical boundaries, the frame, as discussed later with reference to Escher and Piranesi, can also confuse.

The anthropologist, Ian Hodder¹², uses the image of the frame in the development of the concept of the house/home (albeit in Neolithic societies): "*The house acts as a node in a network of relationships... the house binds together social groups and creates a frame within which people were bound by ritual ties and historical associations*" (quoted by Jones, 2007, p.92). Hodder goes on to state that the concept of the house is expressed in and through its architecture, thereby creating actual frames in which these human relationships develop. The frame physically gives dimensional boundaries to the space but also contains the dimension of time. This dimension is visible both in the materials of the physical space, their actual age, and the memories attached to them. The archaeologist, Andrew Jones, from whose work I have taken the quotation from Hodder above, puts it as follows:

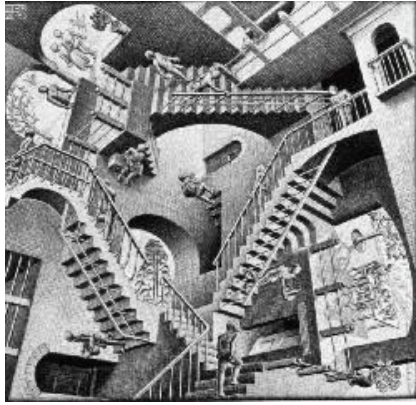
It is precisely because the material world impinges upon the person in a physical and sensual way and occupies a different time span relative to the person, that material culture offers a way of perceiving or cognising the passing of time. It is because of the physical ability of objects to presence the past, and because their physical change indexes the past, that the passing of time is made apparent and it is through the sensual and physical medium of material culture that times past are reexperienced. It is because of, and through the medium of, the temporal framework offered by material culture that memory is produced and made apparent (Jones, 2007, p.61).

The three-dimensional framing that is architecture can be comforting, as in the notion of home and belonging, marking out a personal and private space, a safe place separated from other people and holding one's own belongings and memories. It can also be confining as in prisons and hospitals.

The three scenarios at the beginning of this chapter emphasise the frames further confining a bounded space, which I consider in *I don't have much news*. The frame can also be overwhelming or even disorientating as in the architecture of the lofty and ornate church in *Still small voice*. This latter is not necessarily a safe place.

In a very different way the images of the Paris church are reminiscent of the work of the Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972) in which the eye is deceived into believing impossible structures. Impossible views, the suggestion of a third place in the way of the double squint with which this writing began, are fundamental to this research project and the following paragraphs look at other examples in similar contexts.

One of Escher's best known works, *Relativity (1953)*, below, is almost replicated in the other picture below of St Etienne du Mont, the church I use in *Still small voice*. Escher's etching could never have been a two dimensional rendering of a three dimensional space; his skill is making you believe in this possibility until you realise its impossibility. The church here is rendered two dimensional by the camera, an image captured in the actual space where the chancel and nave overlap. It is this potential for creating an impossible space that I seek to exploit in *Still small voice*.



A likely source of inspiration for Escher, and even more pertinent to this project, is the work of Giovanni Piranesi, the eighteenth century Venetian archaeologist, architect and artist whose *Carceri* was a series of sixteen etchings of imaginary prisons. In the title of the first edition he himself described them as “*invenzione capric*” - capricious inventions, labyrinthine and impossible structures. Escher creations have windows and light entering the space: in fact the direction and strength of the shadows are key to the illusion. St. Etienne du Mont is also infused with light in the image above but Piranesi’s prisons are edged with darkness and hold the eye within the frame. This architectural space confines, confuses and overwhelms.



Piranesi, untitled etching from *Carceri* series

The emphasis here is on the effect of the multiplicity of framed shapes within the whole, how these shapes are perceived within the structure and then within the installation, and the impact this has on the affect.

The separate videos used in *Still small voice* were taken just above waist height in the nave, chancel and

side aisles of a gothic church. Images captured on camera flatten any scene into two dimensional images, resulting in the height and distance of the arches and pillars seeming distorted in such a way that they appear to lean inward and, when projected from floor level onto the side walls of the lecture theatre, this effect is greatly exaggerated and disconcerting, creating an impossible space.

The theologian, Sigurd Bergmann, in an essay on theology and the built environment, discusses the spiritual nature of church architecture particularly through the height of the building and the use of light and shade. He describes the height of the facades in Renaissance churches and the rows of columns constructed on purpose to draw the visitor forward towards the altar *“to create an eschatological feeling of ‘fear and tremble’ (S. Kierkegaard)”* (quoted by Bergmann, 2009, p.291). A European Christian church, so different from a mosque or a synagogue, has, according to Bergmann, a long and narrow shape specifically to draw the gaze and the body forwards and upward, effectively confining the body (and mind) to a particular path.

As regards shadows: darkness and light are crucial to the affect of the building. *“Light plays on the inner surfaces of the building that have complex configuration...shadows appear, sometimes sharp, sometimes smooth in their contours”* (Bergmann, 2009, p.293). The windows are not for looking out but for letting light in, coloured by the stained glass and changing throughout the day and seasons. The only exit is back through the small opening in the massive ceremonial doors. The framed space is powerful and could have been overwhelming when the experience of such places was new.

Although he uses the Gothic cathedral of St Denis in Paris to exemplify this power of architecture to lead forwards and upwards whilst removing personal power, he makes a further comparison with Kurt Schwitters' MERZ (Merzbau, 1937) built environments and the Sagrada Familia Cathedral by Gaudí in Barcelona. In this project it is especially in the comparison between Schwitters' unusual perspectives and the complexities of the architecture of St Etienne du Mont that the feeling of disjunction is highlighted. Schwitters' seemingly ad hoc accretions of cardboard and objects form intricate architectural sculptures where there are references to religious spaces such as chapels and niches holding icons.

They are spaces within spaces, some confining the visitor inside, others only accessible from the

outside, by looking through a window. These continually evolving constructions crowded out first Schwitters' studio, then his house, thus eroding his personal space and the architect's view of home as described at the beginning of this chapter.



Basilica of St Denis, Paris 13th Century



Kurt Schwitters *Merzbau* 1923-37

Again, in relation to church architecture but with a different aim and in a different, earlier era, the Dutch artist, Pieter Saenredam, also meticulously created impossible images. Working in Utrecht in the mid sixteenth hundreds, Saenredam specialised in paintings of churches. In preparation for each work he made studies in which he used complex calculations, making detailed measurements and sketches. He then, for the final painting, joined together different viewpoints, using at least two detailed architectural drawings, to make a composition that became a credible and aesthetically satisfying whole, even though it was physically impossible to see the church as the viewer sees the painting. In one instance, according to Rob Ruurs¹³, the viewpoint of the final composition could only have been made from beyond the outside wall of the church (Schwartz and Bok, 1990, p.92-93). Almost all of Saenredam's paintings use the same picture plane and either face into a space without great depth (into a chancel or across a nave) or down the nave of the church. Tight framing is created by vertical columns and pillars and completed horizontally by the floor and the ceiling vaulting.

In his preparatory sketches Saenredam creates this frame, then he stretches it, making the building seem taller, or he extends the vanishing point, making the nave seem longer. The final painting is seemingly an accurate depiction of the church interior, but it is an illusion created through technical strategies, a build-up of frames and patterns and a precursor of the photographic works discussed below. The American art historian, Svetlana Alpers, commented that Saenredam's

“delicate linear patterns – arch laid on arch with doors folded over, trimmed by pillars thick and thin and bound by walls – have reminded many contemporary viewers ... of the surfaces of a Mondrian. A drawing from the north aisle looking across the nave of the Buur church in Utrecht clearly assembled two views on one surface.... Without moving one’s head and eyes a viewer in the church.... could not at once see to the left and to the right”
 (Alpers, 1983, p.52).

Alpers continues that this

“does not present a fictive, framed window through which we look into the church interior”.

For me, this creates exactly the same impression as looking through the double squint described in the first paragraph of this document but Saenredam has done the squinting for the viewer and created the single image of the two different places. Granted these places are two sides of the same space, but they are conflated to create a third, different place.



Pieter Saenredam *Buur Church in Utrecht*

1645

I could discuss Saenredam’s work in almost any chapter of this writing: the creation of an affect of awe and wonder at the towering buildings in which any human is insignificant could figure in the definition I use of affect or in the chapter on power and relationships. This discussion started in this chapter because of the fascination of architects with the painter’s mathematical perspectives and resulting frames within frames in impossible or at least unusual views as in Victor Burgin’s and Candida Höfer’s work below.

The philosopher, Roland Barthes, focused in an early essay on Saenredam's work as the antithesis of that of his Dutch contemporaries, his vast empty spaces compared with the people and objects that were the subjects of their paintings, his silence as opposed to their noisy bustle. The bareness of Saenredam's churches, - "*stripped of such 'parasites' as God, priests, and liturgical machinery of image and sculpture*" (Barthes, 1953, in Caygill, 2002, p. 47) - strongly contrasts with the gothic splendour of St Etienne du Mont and St Denis as discussed by Bergmann. Almost contemporaneous and exploring the new possibilities in building higher with vaulted ceilings and bigger windows, Dutch architects reflected the northern European Calvinist Protestantism whilst the French exhibited the Roman Catholic flamboyance. Barthes' interest in Saenredam was as a basis to his own thinking on the neutral in a modern aesthetic.

Barthes described Saenredam as "*the negative theologian of Dutch painting*": his contemporaries had already "*washed away religion only to replace it with man and his empire of things. Where once the Virgin presided over ranks of angels, man stands now with his feet upon the thousand objects of everyday life, triumphantly surrounded by his functions*" (Barthes, 1953, in Caygill, 2002, p.41). Saenredam, however, retained the religion that his contemporaries spurned though not as it had been but as a new space. He created a third space visually, both literally in his conflation of different views of each interior and metaphorically in that his work portrayed neither the objects of faith nor the objects of function. His paintings portray very few furnishings, statues, paintings and few people. Furthermore, by emptying the space he created a silence – where was God? Where were the worshippers? In exactly the opposite way, my footage of St Etienne du Mont asks exactly the same questions: all the splendid apparatus for worship is in place but the audible comes mainly from outside the church as people go about their functional activities. Any sounds inside the church are mainly tourists taking a quick look round and moving on. One visitor even inquires where the toilets are.

From Barthes' view of Saenredam's clean, uncluttered and unemotional work, the academic and artist, Sunil Manghani, takes up the thread on neutral seeing from Saenredam and Barthes to his fellow artist and theorist, Victor Burgin, whose work using digital software also uses real places rendered unreal, the image "*rendered in ways we can never humanly see*" (Manghani, 2016, p.132). Two specific works by Burgin, *Prairie (2015)* and *Belledonne (2016)*, are a focus of the book from

which I have quoted Manghani but I have chosen a more recent piece to discuss here as it also references northern European interior painting. Burgin provides an example of frames within frames framed in a gallery (and again framed in the accompanying book) in his 2020 work *Young Oaks*¹⁴. A reference to the 1907 painting *Young Oak Trees* by the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi, this is a succession of views of four interconnecting rooms based on the Danish painter's interiors. Burgin's images, produced using game designers' software, depict hanging paintings, doors and windows, all framed within their own picture frames and hanging on gallery walls. It has a great similarity with the Hopper painting described above in its scale and stillness but also to Candida Höfer's empty spaces. Burgin's images too reflect immobility, any time passing will be that spent by the viewer in front of the framed image in a space containing many more frames.



Victor Burgin *Young Oaks* 2020

Velasquez' masterpiece *Las Meninas* is discussed above in the chapter on place, as a heterotopia and complex combination of different perspectives to create a physically impossible view. Here Velasquez' painting is again brought to mind because of "*bringing into the equation the framing of different elements of the image (the paintings hanging on the wall are echoed by the windows, the mirror and the door in the background) the presentation of these borders at one or another edge of the room in the scene, from the back of the immense canvas to the luminous and evanescent reflection in the mirror, all these elements combine to produce a scenario in the first person and make of the work a masterpiece of painting*¹⁵ (Stoichita, V. *L'instauration du tableau, ICI-TIS*, quoted by Dubreuil-Blondin, 1993, p.10, my translation). Looking through and back but at a different angle – we see the possibility once again of the double squint.

On a very different scale from Burgin but very similar in several ways (scale and image of framed interior) to the Velasquez painting, Candida Höfer's large format photographs have been discussed above in the chapter on place. Here they surprise with their formal, very often symmetrical

composition and viewpoint chosen to enhance this symmetry, turning libraries, theatres, museums into perfect spaces untouched by life. Höfer studied under Bernd and Hilla Becher, whose series of images of gas holders, water towers etc. were ground-breaking in their exploration of the effect of multiple imagery, symmetry and framing in the 1970s. Although her subjects are very different, Höfer's photographs also "*are unavoidably laden with a nagging sense of something missing, their subjects simultaneously available and unavailable, replete and opaque, present and absent*".¹⁶ The quality of the photography in which every detail can be seen at close range gives these images a hyper realistic strangeness and the angle from which she takes the photograph further removes the image from reality. She chooses places with histories and expectations of specific activities and transforms them into something recognisable but with a very different affect.

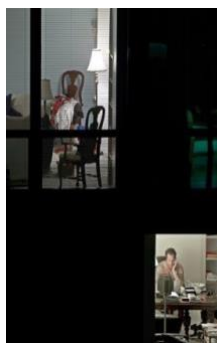


Candida Höfer *Trinity College Library Dublin 2004*

The composition and its frame are key to Höfer's work: in all her images she creates internal frames through the lines of the architecture of the space and so the compositions seem complete and self-sufficient: they are not introducing the idea of a library or a museum and encouraging the viewer to ask questions about the context. Columns, staircases, ceiling decorations, furnishings, floor tiles, all provide lines that make frames within frames and her choice of viewpoints adds a symmetry from top to bottom as well as from side to side. Her image of the library of Trinity College, Dublin, above, completely exemplifies this. In all three works in this project I use the frame of the basic symmetry of my site in which to place the images of the second place.

Before filming in the French church for *Still small voice*, I had had in mind the work of Michael Wolf as well as Candida Höfer, particularly because of the stylistic Becher link, but later the influence of Höfer's work became far more apparent as I developed *I don't have much news*. The two examples below of

Wolf's photographic works are in his series *Life in Cities*, exhibited in the *Rencontres d'Arles* annual festival of photography in 2017. The first, *The Transparent City*, 2008, presents vignettes of people in city tower blocks going about their lives. The second, *Architecture of Density* (2013), is a series of immense photographs of apartment blocks in Hong Kong.



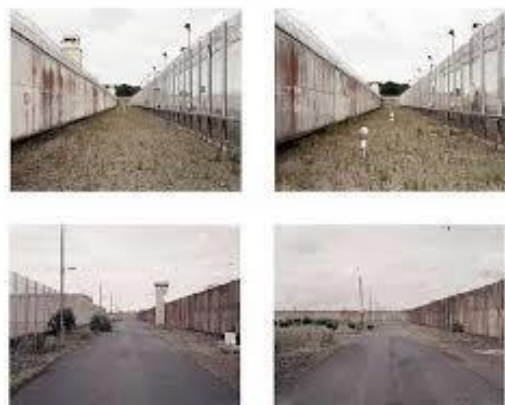
Michael Wolf 1. *The Transparent City* 2008 2. *Architecture of Density* 2013

The spectator has to move close to the picture in order to see the details but, in doing so, is dwarfed by the sheer size and impersonal complexity of the image. These photos are reminiscent of Edward Hopper's paintings, not engaging in the subject matter but presenting it straight into the viewer's line of vision without commentary and thereby suggesting isolation and disconnection. (Hopper's work also influenced Parker's development of *Transitional Object (Psychobarn)* as discussed in the chapter on affect.) Both series of images depict the motionless with the knowledge that there is movement behind the façade of each building.

The comparative timelessness and solid unmoving presence of the church as in *Still small voice* and the anatomy theatre in *Body and soul* contrasts with the knowledge that human activity has been going on inside it for centuries. Although Höfer's choice of subject matter is very different - she uses libraries, theatres, archives and museums for inspiration, - she uses similar strategies to Wolf in focusing on the architecture, symmetries, stillness and, usually, no people.

Again, like Wolf, Höfer's image flattens the perspective; the library's ceiling fills more than a third of the picture. (This is also reminiscent of Saenredam.) In the same tradition is the work of Donovan Wylie¹⁷. His work, for example *The Maze* (2004), photographs of the Northern Ireland prison housing paramilitary prisoners during the Troubles until it was closed in 2000, has both a similar viewpoint, perspective and framing as Höfer's, but also the strong feeling of the desolation of the place: its affect comes over very strongly in the relentless gloom and greyness of the seemingly deserted complex of buildings. It was kept in readiness for possible use if violence

erupted again, so cells still had beds and clean, folded bedding. Again, there was movement, or the potential of movement, behind the seemingly motionless images. Exploring the work of these artists leads back to Foucault and heterotopias as discussed in the first chapter.



Donovan Wylie *The Maze* 2004

A further artist using large scale photographs of tower blocks is David Hopher but the photographs become the pale frames and grids, printed on canvas, on which he originally painted in oils but has gradually evolved to include textural and visual “*interruptions*” (Mead 2002, no page number), panels of Perspex, etched and painted graffiti, layers of cement and even holes cut through to the gallery wall. These works are all based on specific London high rise estates and as such move away from the impassive views common to the artists above. There are no people in Hopher’s pictures but visitors are integrated into the work by their reflections in the Perspex, constantly changing the view. Like Pieter Saenredam, Hopher could equally well have been discussed in a different chapter, in this case either to add to an understanding of place or to that of power and relationships. Unlike Saenredam, Hopher’s works are not tightly fixed by their grids and frames but break out of them and invite the viewer in.



David Hopper 1. *Albany flats* 1977-79 Oil and sand on canvas 197.5 × 279.4 cm, 2. *Windows*, 2000, mixed media on canvas 232x300 cm

I link Hopper's work particularly to *I don't have much news*, although the scale is quite different. The additions he makes to the original images seem to enclose the occupants inside the building behind the layers of Perspex and paint. Unable to go anywhere they are imprisoned in their flats until the barriers are removed. From a contrasting genre the scenes described in Matthias Müller's work below could well be taking place in any one of these flats.

From, Müller's six minute film, *Home Stories* (*Great Expectations Films*, 1990) intertwines clips from several classic Hollywood films of the 1950s and 1960s, where different actresses in different rooms carry out very similar activities. The film theorists, Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener emphasise the impact of the repetition and layering of frames within the frame of the screen: "*Müller's insistent use of frames within frames – doors, windows, staircases, beams and mirrors crowd the composition – emphasizes the inner turmoil pounding against a keen sense of visual confinement. The framing allows women to come into focus, but only to re-enforce their own (sense of) captivity*" (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010, p.52).



Two stills from *Home Stories*

The different uses of framing techniques have been a strategy of film directors throughout the history of the cinema and theorists have categorised directors based on their choices: early theorists made a fundamental distinction between *constructivist* or *formalist* and *realist*, the former “*focuses on the alteration and manipulation of filmic perception, distinct from everyday perception by means of montage, framing or the absence of color and language*” (Elsaesser and Hagen, 2010, p.16). This contrasted with the looseness of the visual structure, for example, in the films of Jean Renoir in the 1940s and 50s, where movement happened freely in and out of the screened image.

However, the films and theoretical writing of Sergej Eisenstein through the 1920s-40s stand as a model for the formalist approach, especially in his method of using the frame to choose a detail extracted as if from an immobile reality instead of giving a snapshot of an ever-changing reality. An example of this is his scene of the soldiers marching down the Odessa steps in the 1925 film *Battleship Potemkin*, where they are in tight formation and any peripheral action is almost out of focus. This scene also brings a particularly resonant image to this project, not in terms of its subject matter beyond the power of authority, but in its reference to sounds and repeated rhythms reinforcing the inexorability of the movement.

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matter beyond the power of authority, but in its reference to sounds and repeated rhythms reinforcing the inexorability of the movement.



*Battleship Potemkin 1925: Runaway Baby Carriage During Odessa Steps Massacre Montage 29.02.2017*¹⁸.

Eisenstein himself refers to this primarily as a “*rhythmic montage*” (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010 p. 26-27) and a drumbeat. The viewer can sense the sounds as the soldiers descend the steps almost in unison, preceded by their shadows, which replicate their pointing guns. In this silent film viewers can automatically add the sounds to what they see based on their experience of similar situations although the accompanying sound was an orchestral score that constantly changed. The early audiences would have experienced the First World War, so they knew what soldiers’ marching sounds like without hearing it and could feel the emotional responses this knowledge affords. In the same way, viewers of the anatomy and operating theatres in *Body and soul* can add a soundtrack in their minds depending on their lived or imagined experience of such places. The following scenes of chaos and horror confirm the dread the scene above had suggested. The complete scene, according to Eisenstein’s montage theory, also includes *tonal* and *overtonal* montage referring to the movement, forms and intensities in the same way as Massumi’s use of *intensity* to define affect within the shots (see chapter above on affect). These different types of montage should create a tension through “*vibrations: consciously generated conflicts to grasp a pre-ordained idea or experience a desired effect*” (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010, p. 26-27).

Film historians describe Eisenstein’s influence on such directors as Hitchcock and Spielberg but, for this project, I am travelling via the westerns of John Ford and his use of frames, most memorably in his opening sequence to *The Searchers* (1956), up to the most recent, *The Power of the Dog*, released at Venice in September, 2021 and whose director, Jane Campion, uses similar framing techniques. Both directors use this to focus on a precise element in an otherwise vast landscape and to show the loneliness and isolation of the scene when looking out through the door or

window.



Still from *The Searchers*

In this scene from *The Searchers* the camera movement is minimal, just slightly nearer or further from the door but not wavering from its central position; and in this point in Campion's film the camera moves from window to window parallel to the action outside.



Image taken on computer screen 20.12.2021

The movement of the camera echoes the pace of the man walking like Eisenstein's rhythmic montage.

The 1970s works of Chantal Akerman, the Belgian film-maker, fit very clearly into this tradition with her consistent camera level, limited movement and (short) distance from the subject. As the art historian, Margaret Iversen (2018, p.742-760¹⁹) points out, "[Akerman's] *debt to structural film, with its non-narrative use of fixed camera or tracking shots and long takes, is evident in News from Home (1976).*" Iversen goes on to comment on Akerman's choices of either filming from moving vehicles such as cars and subway trains, or shots where the camera is fixed but vehicles move in front of it. Iversen describes exactly a sequence which I include in *I don't have much news*: "[Akerman] positioned a camera in a subway opposite the sliding doors. The train

arrives at a station where the doors part to reveal a chance composition of pillars, posters and people on the platform. The doors slide shut and the process is repeated several times” (Iversen, 2018).



News from home

In *News from home* Akerman particularly uses two other contrasting framing strategies. One is very similar in shape to the work of Höfer and Wylie above when she faces up a street or subway line, creating a viewpoint central to the image, as in the scenes visible at each end of *I don't have much news*. In the other, which Campion uses in the scene from *The Power of the Dog* above, moving parallel to, and thus flattening, the scene, Akerman's camera is facing out of a vehicle travelling the length of a New York street with its regular pattern of blocks. In the subway, however, the camera is stationary, facing the line whilst the trains arrive, stop, restart and leave, each time recreating or revealing the regular pattern of the train windows and doors and the station architecture. As Iversen, says, many of Akerman's and Hopper's images “feature doors and windows as frames within frames functioning as distancing devices”. This is discussed further in the chapter on *I don't have much news*.

Very differently from all the artists and filmmakers discussed above, Akerman had no knowledge of what would actually take place in these long takes in the subway. She knew that the frames were established with the camera fixed and on automatic, as was the pattern of train movement and opening and closing of the doors, but she had no way of controlling the actual outcomes.

Iversen concludes that “through the distanced, rigorous, serial, levelling, repetitive structure of the film, the scenes gather a mechanized life of their own, beyond the control of the filmmaker” (2018).

It is as much the lack of control over the actions in the footage as the tight control over the frames that contributed to my choice of *News from home*. This discussion would also be relevant

in the chapter on power and relationships below.

The patterns created by the diminishing repetition and limited tonal variation in *I don't have much news* are very similar to the frames of many classical works in galleries and stately homes. Is this larger part of the image reminiscent of the Baroque fantasias that were popular frames in his time and to which Kant was referring when describing the *parergon*? Using Kant's definition as his starting point, Jacques Derrida later went on to define a *parergon* as follows: "*parergon: neither work (ergon) nor outside the work (hors d'oeuvre), neither inside or outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work*" (Derrida, 1978, p. 9). This describes exactly the questions this work poses: it superimposes one place on another version of itself and creates a third, fourth and fifth place within the same boundaries. This place is then included in the frame of the screen on which the audio-visual footage is projected and again in the frame of the lecture theatre. Does the first place (where the television screen dominates) still exist or has it become the object in the complex frame for the second place, et cetera?

It is self-evident that any physical entity must have boundaries, however huge. In this project these edges signify the metaphorical constraints of the power relationships between the elements in the works, the definition of place, including home, and the leakage of sounds and sights from beyond these constraints. Therefore, the frame constitutes the physical bass line (as described by Starobinski, quoted above in the chapter on place) to the whole project.

4. Sound and affect: the audible and the inaudible

In this chapter the development of sound in art is described alongside its power to evoke memories, such as the voices Colin Harper remembered as he approached the church at the very beginning of this project. Sound does not respect physically imposed frames but leaks through them, conveying, for example, the sound of the organ outside into the streets and the police siren into the church. The human ear filters sound, no longer registering the sounds of repeated daily noises, but also expecting to hear certain sounds in certain contexts. In the works in this project sound is as important as the visual elements in establishing the affect, the dislocation created by the elision of the different places. What is not audible is equally important when the expected sounds are absent.

“Every building has its characteristic sound of intimacy or monumentality, invitation or rejection, hospitality or hostility. A space is understood and appreciated through its echo as much as through its visual shape, but the acoustic percept usually remains as an unconscious background experience”

(Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 50). In *The Eyes of the Skin*, the architect moves away from the obviously visual in art and architecture to discuss the importance of the other senses, especially sound. Pallasmaa introduces the notion of sound being as much part of a place as its architecture, even though it might not be consciously perceived in the same way as the physical buildings with their shapes and scale. The visible and the audible are not separate and distinct but equal integrated elements of each place. Pallasmaa’s use of the word ‘echo’ is particularly apposite here as it can refer literally to the acoustics of a building but also to the memories appertaining to it.

Marc Augé (1995, p.61), in explaining that the difference between a place and a non-place is the lack of imprint of people and history in the latter, comments on Starobinski’s reference to the beginning of Proust’s *Du côté de chez Swann*²⁰ where the cycle of the hours around the Combray bell tower punctuates the rhythm of the day. And creating *“the possibility of a polyphony in which the virtually infinite interlacing of destinies, actions, thoughts and reminiscences would rest on a bass line that chimed the hours of the terrestrial day, and marked the position that used to be (and still could be) occupied there by ancient ritual”*²¹ It is this bass line that describes the soundtrack to the works in this project, where everyday background sounds continue to be heard more loudly than those sounds that are perhaps to be expected in the places featured in the installations.

Luigi Russolo's 1913 futurist manifesto, *The Art of Noises*, suggested that the human ear had become accustomed to the noises of the industrial landscape and that it required a new language of instrumentation and composition. This new language would be spoken through the use of new technologies to create sounds beyond the possibilities of the familiar orchestra. He went on to list the different sounds that would need these new instruments to represent them. This was probably the first theoretical writing on sound and technology as opposed to music, but it was not until the 1970s that the possibilities of sound as art began to be explored. Early theoretical writing about sound in art tends to focus on avant-garde, experimental music, particularly that of John Cage²² and on the musical notation of natural rhythms and sounds. The academic, R. Murray Schafer specialised in the history of sound in the avant-garde and media arts and his 1977 book, *Our Sonic Environment and The Soundscape: the Tuning of the World*, is dedicated to the different ways in which the sounds in our environment can be written down.

The use of the voice as an instrument was developed in early performance art, such as the 1975 work of the Serbian artist, Marina Abramović', *Freeing the voice*. This three hour performance in a youth centre in Belgrade explored the range of sounds possible in breathing deeply in and out over an extended period. In the United States, Vito Acconci performed *Claim* (1971) and *Seedbed* (1972), where the artist's body was not directly visible to the visitor but "what we are given in both instances is a displacement of presence – Acconci is somewhere else – and an amplification of it, for his voice, his body, is all too close" (LaBelle, 2006, p. 108). Brandon Labelle, as quoted above, describes the experience of sound in a specific space, developing from installation art in the USA in the 1970s, specifically in the works of Vito Acconci, Max Neuhaus and Maryanne Amacher.

At this point, artists and musicians were beginning to use specific spaces to install sounds: in *Claim* Acconci sat, blindfolded, at the bottom of a staircase of the offices of a magazine in New York, his voice and actions projected into the building's gallery space on a video monitor and in *Seedbed* he lay under a wooden ramp responding to the sounds of people walking over the ramp by masturbating and talking. The musician, Max Neuhaus, on the other hand, spent his career exploring the effect of installing audio-tracks in public places. *Times Square* was first installed in 1977 where sounds emitted from the subway grate gave the impression of an undulating drone.²³ It remained in place until 1992, was reinstalled in 2002 and still continues.

Amacher's work was similarly rooted in public places: over thirteen years between 1967 and 1980 she created her *City Links* series for which she installed microphones in one location and broadcast the sounds in a different, distant location. Her aim was to create “*synchronicities of different places*”, finding the “*tone of place*” (Labelle, 2006, p. 172). This is similar to the notion of combining two places to discover the effect this has on the affect they carry with them, key to the questions I ask in this project. She went on to describe the importance of architecture in creating sound environments as her practice developed over her career.

LaBelle sums up the importance of space, or specific places, in the use of sound in art:

“acoustical experience is always embedded in the conversation of sound and space, as a reciprocal exchange, for sounds are positioned within given spatialities and are thus affected by their materiality, their relation to other spaces, and the general environmental geography. Such effects flow in reverse, for space is partially given definition by the acoustical presence of environmental sounds, whether outside the given space or within, from a space's own internal infrastructural workings, such as the hum of air-conditioning and ventilation or lighting systems. The sound-space interplay is inherently conversational in so far as one speaks to the other—when sounds occur, they are partially formed by their spatial counterpart, and spatial experience is given character by the eccentricities of sound events” (Labelle, 2006, p. 149).

In the meantime, Nam June Paik was creating a whole new world of art using variations on classical music and performance, especially with the cellist, Charlotte Moorman, stating that his strategy was to develop the link between performer and audience: in an essay in 1963 (*New Ontology of Music (PAIC) 1963*)²⁴ he wrote “*In normal concert[s], the sounds move, the audience sit down*”. In Paik's concerts Moorman would often perform partly dressed or nude, which links to the discussion on the use of the body in the chapter on power and relationships and is reminiscent of the body central to the operating and anatomy theatres. As the Chicago academic, Rachel Jans says “*The presentation of [Moorman's] gendered body was not only an effort to bring the qualities and history of the visual arts into music, but also a proposition for a structural relationship between the spectator and the performers*” (Jans in Lee and Frieling, 2019, p. 91). Gradually Paik moved towards using technology in the form of such things as old televisions and radios, and then into video installations, but almost always with lights and sounds. His work, between the early 1960s and his

death in 2006, has been critical in the development of sound in art. This move from the body to mechanical representation figured in my early intentions for *Body and soul*.



Moorman in Nam June Paik's *Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes*, 1971

In 2000, the Hayward Gallery showed *Sonic Boom*²⁵, an exhibition totally dedicated to sound art installations. These works used a variety of methods and materials to create an equally varied set of sounds which leaked more or less into each other through the various spaces of the gallery. Sounds and the machines making them had become independent works of art. This exhibition marked the divergence between using sound *per se* as an art object and the use of sound, for example, in installation or film to create particular effects or affects.

Where the two coincide, but in different ways, is in works by Haroon Mirza, Christian Marclay and Susan Philipsz.

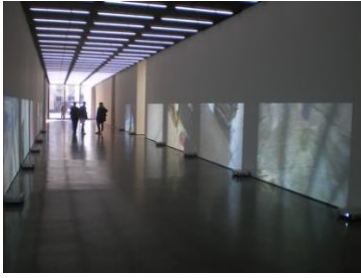
Mirza's work, already introduced in the chapter on frames and thresholds, combines the choice of place with light and sound. He uses the architecture of his installation venue to create a pattern of lights and sounds that is unique to that place. These elements are indivisible as they are both created by the same thing: sound is made in some of his work by electric circuits triggered by different stimuli. In the same way as, for example, a certain affect is created by the German artist, Anselm Kiefer in his choice of dark and weighty lead as the material for his work, the complex internal architecture of the churches chosen by Mirza causes the sounds to behave in a way that also creates an affect particular to the place. In his installation in Copenhagen, described above in the chapter on place, visitors are invited to experience these sounds seated on cushions placed in a circle inside the ring of speakers, reminiscent of the contemplation or meditation that being in a church would suggest.

On a small scale compared with the feat that is *The Clock* (2010) and very uncomplicated compared with *48 War Films*, created for the 2019 Venice Biennale and discussed in the chapter on *I don't have much news*, Christian Marclay's *Pub Crawl* (2015) epitomises the importance of sound in

creating affect. This work, already described in the introduction to this research, is made up of twelve video projections lined up at floor level, in this case either side of the main corridor of the White Cube gallery in Bermondsey, the soundtrack, which also comes from the same level with speakers placed on the floor, is of the percussion sounds made by post-pub detritus passed in the gutter as the artist videos his walk. What would normally pass almost unnoticed in the background is emphasised and so takes on a different role, changing the balance of the elements of the installation. In this work of Marclay's it is appropriate to use the word percussion: it is not actually the noise that would be made by someone catching the cans with their shoe as they passed by but the objects are struck like glockenspiels or tubular bells. In this way the recorded sounds are clearer and more distinct.

Although the next comments are probably more relevant to a different chapter, they link so closely with the image described in *Pub Crawl* that it seems more appropriate to include them here. In *Still Small Voice* the chairs in the lecture theatre echo the pews in the main screen video so the visitor becomes part of a congregation in a similar way to that in which the visitor's shadow completes the picture of someone walking along the edge of the street, just out of the gutter. Also, the scale and angle of view: the viewer needs to look up or look down, feel big or feel small in proportion to the projection. This figures again in relation to *Still small voice*, where the scale of the church and the point of view of the viewer/visitor (in this case looking up instead of down) are crucial in emphasising the affect including awe. At that point I use the work of the seventeenth century Dutch painter, Pieter Saenredam, as an example.

In this work of Marclay's the projections of both the images and the sounds are larger than life size. This is incomplete until visitors walk through the corridor: as they walk the shadows of their legs are also projected onto the screens, completing the impression of a walk taking place, along with the sound of the visitors' shoes. Although sound is important, it is not the sole focus of the piece: it is used as one medium in a mixed media piece. Another important aspect is in the integration of the visitor into the work.

Christian Marclay *Pub Crawl*

(2015) (my images)

The sounds feel natural but in fact are not. In *Surround Sounds*, another piece in the same exhibition²⁶ visitors enter a silent, dark room where all four walls come alive with hundreds of animated onomatopoeias (*Splat! Sploosh!*) plucked from comic books. "Zoom" and "whizz" race across the walls; "beep" blinks relentlessly. Though the video has no sound, the effect is loud.



Actions: Whupp Shlump Sloosh Slutch (No.3)

(Screen print and acrylic on canvas taken from the *Surround Sounds* video installation)

In both works visitors feel sounds that match their experience or expectation of what they see even if they are artificially created or even non-existent. They might be created like instrumental sounds but they are not music, they are disconnected from the visual and leave it to the viewer to imagine the appropriate noise. The similar effect produced by Eisenstein in the soldiers' marching scene in *Battleship Potemkin* is also described in the chapter on frames and thresholds above.

Composer and theorist Michel Chion, writing about sound in films, comments that noises are generally not commented on by writers because of their "scanty presence in the films themselves.....In fact, in a classical film, between the music and the omnipresent dialogue, there is hardly room for anything else" (Chion, 1990, p. 145), but in artworks noise plays a

different role. As in the works cited above, it is not there as a backdrop enhancing the mood of the scene but as an element in its own right.

Susan Philipsz uses sound with a similar purpose to Marclay, but with music not noise. In 2010, the same year that she won the Turner Prize with *Lowlands Away*, in which her ethereal singing voice emanates from under bridges in Glasgow, she also created *Surround me* in London. In this work she again uses her voice but this time to evoke the London of the early 17th century in acoustic environments of the 21st century City. As the writer Iain Sinclair says,

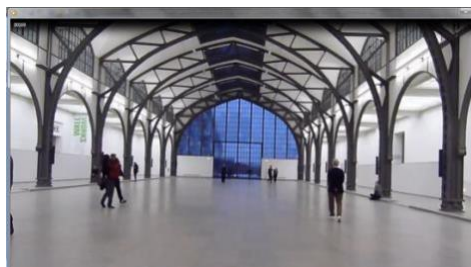
“she is creating an elegy for the loss of London. Being here is to be as close as you are going to get at all to the sense of the Elizabethan and the medieval city – it was a city of bells. To walk about the City of London would have been a deafening experience, because bells were rung competitively in all of the different churches. So you were in an acoustic bell jar; and Susan Philipsz’s project is just a teasing memory of that” (Sinclair, 2011, video audiotrack).

Even though both elements are of and in London, they bring together two very different places and times and create an affect of dislocation and perhaps nostalgia.

In *Part File Score* (2014) elements of orchestral music gradually unfold through the huge hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof, the Berlin station transformed into art gallery. In this work Philipsz inserts a specific affect into a place with very different affects, thus creating a third affect that both melds the two and causes a dissonance or feeling of dislocation. Philipsz’ choice of music represents places: the score in *Part File Score* is a reminder of the pre- unification of Berlin. For this work Philipsz chose the 12-tone work of Hanns Eisler, an avant-garde Jewish-Austrian composer who had experienced surveillance and deportation. She broke the work up into its twelve tonal elements played on a violin, cello, piano and trumpet. Broadcasting each of these from separate speakers down the length of the vast, empty station, Philipsz creates an eerie affect.

There is no point at which all the sounds can be heard together and become a complete composition and the viewer is compelled to keep moving in order to glimpse different sounds overlapping. The movement is like that of travellers passing through the station but, instead of hurrying, they are in slow motion and the station is almost empty. The black speakers attached at a high level on each column in the almost empty hall emit the sounds but also have the look of

surveillance cameras, from which there is no escape. The traveller is small, helpless and disorientated but the music is beautiful. There is a disconnect between the place, which, even though it is now an art gallery, is still very obviously the main hall of a railway station, and the sounds that create a feeling of dislocation and being in a non-place, a heterotopia.



Susan Philipsz *Part File Score* Hamburger Bahnhof 2014 (my images)

Moving on to sound in the modern cinema, sound seems natural, words come from mouths, footsteps from the feet touching the floor, changing position as the mouths and feet move.

It is, however, far from natural, created and applied after the visual elements have been filmed.

Most of Chion's *Audio-vision: sound on screen* is dedicated to the historical development of cinematic sound but it is his brief sub-chapter on sound on the television (Chion, 1994, pp. 157-161) that resonates (deliberate choice of word) particularly with this project, and *I don't have much news* in particular. He chooses two films of works by Marguerite Duras that dissociate sound and image: *India Song* (1975) and *Le Camion* (1977). He says that, in the first "*all the sounds of the film congregate around the image they do not inhabit, like flies on a window pane. This is definitely cinema*" (Chion, 1994, p. 158), whilst the second is based on a conversation in a living room, to which images of the lorry etc. are "*outside the narration*". For Chion this is televisual: images are added to dialogues, scripts and conversations. Television and cinema have moved much closer together in the thirty years since Chion wrote this (see the discussion of film in the chapter on frames and thresholds earlier) and there is little difference between cinematic and televisual sound.

Chantal Akerman, however, was working contemporaneously with Duras and demonstrates exactly what Chion defined as televisual in her approach to the link between image and sound in her films in that she focusses on the tightly framed image on a scale that seems perfectly suited to the television screen. Furthermore, the voiced soundtrack in *News from home* has no links with

the images except when the sound of one drowns out the other. I have chosen to enhance the link with the televisual by making the screen central to the “action” in *I don't have much news* and including sounds in the living room in the same way as Akerman overlaid the two audio tracks.

In *I don't have much news* the repeated actions and the controlled space speak of acceptance of imposed physical constrictions and the relationships within them, correlating effectively with Sartre's *Huis Clos* in its scenario. What is the relationship between the two people watching television in *I don't have much news*? Who has autonomy? Who is objectified? Is this true of either of them? This is a subject for reflection in the chapter on power below but it is raised here because the relationships are delineated particularly by the audiotracks. As described again later in the chapter about this particular work, the superimposed clips show different sessions in front of the television, each video showing the couple watching the previous session. There is no conversation and no visual or tactile communication between the two people, sounds are limited to those in the video on the television screen (plus the clock in the living-room). This video sound is the voice of Chantal Akerman reading in French above the noises of the cars and subway trains of her film. This voice in a foreign language not only emphasises the distance between the mother and daughter in Akerman's film but also distances itself from the scene in front of the television screen, relying on subtitles to ensure understanding. The nature of this lack of any communication is not actively explored further in the video, but is left to the viewer to interpret, perhaps by referring to their own experience during the pandemic.

In both *I don't have much news* and in Akerman's film there are two protagonists. In the latter the geographical distance between the mother and daughter and obvious incompleteness of their communications – “*tu n'as toujours pas envoyé des photos, pense-y. J'aimerais tant les voir*” – suggest that this distance is deliberate on Akerman's part and she deliberately emphasises this in the disjunction between the visual and the aural. Towards the end of the clip the noise of the approaching train drowns out the voice, breaking the communication even more.

A leitmotif in my work is a repeated sound, be it church bells, a clock ticking or a squeaking door, but is so ingrained in the fabric of the footage that it passes unnoticed like the traffic noise in Stoke Charity until revisited in a different space or at a different volume. In *Still small voice* the prominence of sounds unrelated to the expectations and experience of the environment, but

which were actually the sounds caught on the video, is a crucial part of the work. The audio track is always of the sounds that were in “earshot” of the video camera, which does not discriminate in the same way as the human brain. In *Body and soul* a squeaking door seems unnatural in the empty space and the clock in *I don't have much news* seems to join the sounds of the Akerman film.

Are the sounds on these audio tracks just noise? They are noises that make sense in terms of what they are the sounds of, such as the police siren or the church organ or the clock but, when the volume is turned up, as in the large church in *Still small voice*, it stops being the individual sounds and becomes noise, unavoidable by the visitors' ears and therefore their notice. The definition seems to be that, if what is heard makes sense in its context, it is described as sounds but, if it is disconnected from its expected meaning or is loud or uncomfortable, it is described as noise.

In the works in this project the aural contents have been recorded simultaneously with the video – they are the actual soundtracks to the video footage taken in each place. Some refer to the past in sounds appearing that continue to resemble the sounds of the past, for example, the church bell may have been replaced many times over the centuries but there is still a church bell ringing the time and services. Others are sounds of the present brought unexpectedly into prominence, like the drill in *Still small voice*, or the creaking door in the otherwise virtually silent *Body and soul*.

In *Body and soul* sound is expected: excited voices waiting for the action to start, the bustle of many spectators finding their seats, then the screams of the unanaesthetised patient but there is only the sound of some footsteps on the floorboards and a sharply creaking door.

Sound punctuates and surrounds our experience. We are never totally free of it: even in a soundproof space we hear our own heartbeats. On the other hand, when there seems to be no sound it is often because our brains filter out sounds that are continuous or habitual to our daily life. Sounds such as those that are generally unnoticed because of their habitual presence are in this project being brought into focus and made louder so that their proportions are changed in relation to the visual counterpart. People responding to their visit to the tiny church in Stoke Charity that inspired this project commented on the silence both inside and outside the building but recordings of these visits revealed a constant hum of traffic in the background. Unceasing

sounds which no one any longer heard. Similarly, the audio-tracks from videos of the Parisian church in *Still small voice* included outside church bells tolling the hour and occasionally the noises of police sirens and motor bikes.

In this research project, the sounds/noises add an extra layer to the affect of dislocation: they are exactly the noises encountered in the places where the video camera was in action but they are rarely the ones the listener would be expecting and attuned to in that location or in those circumstances. In spite of this they provide a context, the actual sounds of present-day life leaking into the different time and place presented in the installation. It is this combination of recorded sounds from one place superimposed on to the ambient sound of the place in which the former is installed that disturb the expectations formed from previous experience in the viewer's or visitor's mind and contributes towards the formation of a third place and its own particular affect.

5. Power/relationships: where power lies

*In this chapter I discuss the locus of power and the nature of relationships across the works in this project. In all three I have specifically chosen scenarios in which there is an imbalance of power, very overtly so in *Still small voice* and *Body and soul*, less directly addressed in *I don't have much news*. Beginning with the latter I discuss Sartre's existentialism and the impossibility of an equality of power between individuals. From this I move onto Foucault's thinking about control of populations and thence to the power of institutions, such as the church in *Still small voice*, and wealth, which has implications for science, learning and women's power, particularly over their own bodies, in *Body and soul*.*

Scenario 1: Three people confined together in a room with no way out in terms of either space or time.

Scenario 2: Two people confined together in a room with no knowledge of when there will be a way out.

These are the protagonists in the first two scenarios described at the beginning of the chapter on frames. The first is Sartre's *Huis clos*, a dramatic enactment of his view that "*l'enfer, c'est les autres*" (hell is other people). The second is my work, *I don't have much news*, reflecting the physical and mental constrictions imposed during the pandemic in 2020-21.

From the Parisian church, via the Barcelona anatomy theatre to the lecture theatre and the living-room during the pandemic, all these reflect questions about where power lies and how relationships are managed.

Jean-Paul Sartre's early existentialist theory and fiction form a metaphorical starting point informing my reflection on the current project. From his work not only issues of relationship and power but also time and space, frame and thresholds, noise and silence, disjunction and

superimposition naturally flow. Starting with Sartre my reflection on power and relationships moves outwards from him towards, for example, the thinking of Michel Foucault, and then to the artists already figuring in this research project but with reference here to the questions their works ask about power and relationships.

What was the effect of the imposed environment of *Huis Clos* on the protagonists and on their relationship with each other? This reflection begins in terms of Sartre's existentialist theory by taking up the two themes of the exertion of personal freedom (the *pour-soi*) and of response to the awareness (*regard*) of the other (the *pour-l'autrui*). Sartre posits that one person cannot have personal freedom without objectifying others.

In practice objectifying the other has been a constant throughout known human history as different groups sought to assert their dominance over other groups, but in modern history, as groups became states, either political or religious (often the same thing), the focus has been on internal control, where the modern *regard* becomes surveillance. This leads us to the thinking of Michel Foucault again. As Foucault tracks through the development of the state from the two directions of the early Christian church and the later demands of capitalism, the key theme is power through identification and objectification of the other, facilitated by the church's pastorate – the sacrifice of self to the shepherd - from early separating out the obviously "other", such as lepers, by geographical isolation from the community, to building institutions to keep the "other" out of society, to the final stage in which the individuals subject themselves to the political and economic norm. The more, according to Foucault, the capitalist state cares for the economic welfare of its population the more it interests itself in the political value of the human body and how it can be manipulated to ensure the mind's compliance with the particular state's expectations. (This is not confined to capitalism.)

This interest is not necessarily overtly punitive; it can be an insistence on particular behaviours in order to preserve people's health and we shall see how this thinking can be brought to bear on the effects of the pandemic in 2020-21. However, in *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1975), Foucault coins and discusses the descriptive "*biopouvoir*" (*bio-power*), comprising the development of detailed statistics about human groups, so that measures (benign or otherwise) can be specifically targeted at certain groups, and an interest in the human body as an object to be manipulated and controlled. (Today's social media algorithms?) As we follow Foucault's thinking, it also becomes clear how my work in general reflects this: the choice of places

from which to draw inspiration – churches, lecture and medical theatres and the home during a time of restricted movement. These figure specifically in Foucault's analysis of the development of power from the early Christian church: in his lectures in the USA in 1979 and 1980²⁷ he described the "*insidiously destructive power of the modern Western world as thus being traced back to the unique configuration of the self, knowledge, and power that came from uniting the early Christian practices with political power as it had traditionally been understood*" (Holland, 2002-3, pp. 79-97).

Progressing through *Discipline et Punir* are the arguments for human bodies to be trained, "*les corps dociles*", to be effective in the needs of the state. Starting with such groups as soldiers, then eventually through behaviour and curriculum in the education systems, even to the elite universities in France where a tightly codified system of learning is still in place and accepted by the population in general. This is important: Foucault is very clear that this works only because it has benefits for most people: they would not accept pure coercion without any benefit for long. However, deviance from the expected codes would be punished. Foucault then moves on to discuss the places in which these punishments would take place and the realisation by those in power that it was not only essential to create places to constrict movement but also where internal activity could be monitored: the birth of systematic surveillance and the notion of the panopticon, a structure devised to give optimum visibility of one section of the community to another group, who are themselves virtually invisible.

In London, Jeremy Bentham put this idea into a design for a prison in 1791, whilst in Edinburgh in 1792 Robert Barker created the first panorama. Both were designed to give the viewer, whoever that might be, the most complete view possible, but the motives and the view were very different. The power resides with the viewer as to how to make use of this view.

The ability to monitor every movement of a particular subject is not always deemed to be with the intention of ensuring constraint: a patient in intensive care is similarly monitored, the constant being the focus on the body/object. During the pandemic, the legally binding expectation that the population should only leave their homes to ensure their physical needs for food and exercise were yet again focussed on "*corps dociles*" as did the later rules on quarantine after travelling, but with the added dimension of surveillance to ensure the rules were carried out.

Sartre's *pour-l'autrui* and Foucault's views on surveillance and society's acceptance of this are important in this project: the historic power of the Church to model expectations of behaviour under an all-seeing deity and the guilt and shame that ensued from failure to conform to the model, as opposed to making free decisions for oneself, are still apparent in some visitors' discomfited reactions to *Still small voice*. The physical imbalance of power between the large church and the small individual can be seen particularly in the video clip of a visitor in the installation, though foreshortening caused by the viewpoint of the camera renders this less clear on the video clip than when the viewer is actually present in the scene. As she wanders around in the space she is dwarfed by the projections, the pillars of the church projected onto the side walls seeming to turn in over her. The original footage of the church interior was taken with the camera at a low angle (chest level) with the result that the pillars appear to diminish towards the top of the image and be heavier and move inwards from the sides. The powerful weight of the structure reflects the historical and emotional power of the Church.



This history and acceptance of power can be viewed from its weaving into my experience to contribute to my sense of where I belong, my sense of home: the particular sense of a place and emotions experienced through such a place exemplify its *affect*. This concept is often discussed with reference to architecture. For example, already quoted in the chapter on affect, with reference to creating a new building, Kraftl and Adey talk of the composition of affect as “*the operation of moral geographies of childhood at the school, and of ‘quiet’ at the Prayer Room*” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008, p. 226), which “*remind us that the creation and experience of affect is highly politicised*” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008, p. 215). The references to school and to prayer in Kraftl and Adey’s article are apposite here, especially as they are looking at these buildings in an attempt to go beyond “*mere homeliness*” in their design for affect. As regards power and relationships, perhaps their view is disingenuous: they aim to create a specific affect ready in place for the users of the

buildings concerned, using their power to decide beforehand the relationships they wanted to be created in the spaces they had designed.

As discussed in the chapter on frames and thresholds, Bergmann discusses church architecture, particularly through the height and the use of light and shade, in terms of its spiritual nature. He describes the height of the facades and the rows of columns drawing the visitor forward towards the altar to create in this visitor a feeling of awe. Returning to relationships and power, awe firmly places the viewer in a subordinate role, the small individual in the immensity of the building and what it represents.

In different ways, artists already discussed in chapters above were asking questions in their work about power and relationships. Rachel Whiteread's *House* pinpointed the destruction of the local community when the area was demolished to make room for new, more expensive and more densely populated housing. It is unlikely that the local residents had more than a nominal say in this redevelopment, the balance of power being firmly weighted on the side of the developers and politicians. Her Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial (2000) in Vienna is the ultimate symbol of the misuse of power. It is a concrete and steel construction whose exterior is a cast of a library with all the books' pages facing outwards, so the titles are unknown, representing the vast number of victims of the Nazis. Emphasising the void and negativity Whiteread depicts the opposite of the grandiose and triumphal monuments created throughout history as a permanent proclamation of power over others.



Rachel Whiteread *Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial*, Vienna 2000

Jeremy Deller's 2001 re-enactment of the Battle of Orgreave, which originally took place in 1984, brought back to life the event that was later deemed to be the turning point in the power struggle between the miners and the government of the day. Police, including cavalry, brought in from many

forces and striking miners from the coaking plant in Orgreave met in a violent confrontation resulting in 95 arrests and many injuries. Deller's re-enactment refreshed the collective memory of the event, both locally, as some of the participants on both sides had also participated in the original and would have passed on their stories, and wider afield, as the political and social effects of the miners' actions had reverberated across society. Deller's work, like Whiteread's earlier *House*, was created on the exact site as that which inspired it and by choosing participants who had an emotional stake in the event, the artist was able to achieve an intensity that could not have been created on a site without these connotations. This intensity reflected the struggle for power inherent in the original events and the relationships forged or destroyed by them.



Whiteread and Deller's works are powerful indictments of the misuse of power and imbalance of relationships. Most of the other artists discussed in this project also reference these notions, albeit less directly, through the choices of sites depicted in their work and/or the sites in which their work is installed.

Susan Philipsz's sound installations contrast the power represented by the sites in which she installed them with the content of the soundtracks. Her *Part file score* (2014), described in detail in the above chapter on sound, picks up similar themes to Whiteread's Holocaust Memorial in Vienna: she broadcasts the music of a Jewish-Austrian composer in the vast German station. *Surround me* (2010) is sited around and in streets and squares in the City of London where modern buildings rise above streets still bearing names from medieval times and Philipsz returns to those times with her voice. Iain Sinclair, the prolific chronicler of London past and present,²⁸ made a commentary on a walk round and through the installations, finishing in Tokenhouse Yard:

The Silver Swan, by Orlando Gibbons, is really a madrigal of the end of an era. It's about death, and Daniel Defoe records coming into Tokenhouse Yard in his Journal of the Plague

Years, and seeing just a deserted city; and that is the theme echoed in this particular Susan Philipsz installation. The Silver Swan becomes the ghost-like emanation of the melancholy that has been haunting the whole project, and it comes to ground here in Tokenhouse Yard, and the Silver Swan, which is part of the song, comes into Tokenhouse Yard as into a harbour; and it's the place where everything comes to an end. For the first time the reason for the melancholy is evident, and it's death – it's mortality. And it's a song against dying, and against a dying city (Sinclair, 2011, Tate Shots).

In this work Philipsz pinpoints power and relationship contrasts that have always existed in London but emphasises the even greater inequalities that exist today, especially in the City.

Jane and Louise Wilson's *Stasi City* (1997) references East Berlin as their video camera explored the deserted headquarters of the East German Secret Police. The almost empty interrogation rooms and almost deserted corridors, the occasional chair or telephone brought into sharper focus the memories of what took place in this building than a complete reconstruction could ever achieve. As a label for its exhibition in 2006, the New York Museum of Modern Art²⁹ ended: "*Stasi City is an imprint of the haunting memories embedded in architecture*".



Stills from *Stasi City* (1997)

Donovan Wylie's series of photographs, *The Maze* (2004), is similar to the Wilsons' work in its images of nearly empty buildings but these seem to be silently lying in wait with the bedlinen neatly folded in case the prison is needed again. Unlike the Wilsons' work, the images are still and there is no sound. There is no warmth to be found in the symmetrical monochrome images but the architecture brings back memories of the troubles in Ireland and sober imagining of life in this prison.

As we see throughout this chapter, the architecture of chosen sites and the memories this evokes are the foundation of each work. This is also clear in Cornelia Parker's *Transitional Object*

(Psychobarn) (2016), as discussed in the first chapter above, when she uses the materials of a traditional red barn with its memories of homelands to construct a stage set representing the house in Hitchcock's horror film, *Psycho* (1960) which was itself based on Edward Hopper's *House by the Railroad* (1925): so many layers of memories evoking as many layers of different relationships.

Much earlier, Saenredam painted the smallness of the human being in comparison with the literal building as the metaphorical institution of the Church, and Turner and Friedrich depicted this same human frailty in contrast with the power of nature. In this way they all show humanity's lack of power and the complete imbalance in its relationship with the deity and with nature – which may be the revelation of the deity to humanity.

In *I don't have much news* the repeated actions and the controlled space speak of acceptance of imposed physical constrictions and the relationships within them, correlating effectively with Sartre's *Huis Clos* in its scenario. What is the relationship between the two people watching television in *I don't have much news*? The viewer can see the older woman and deduce that the other person with the balding head is a man; that description is what is physically visible but it doesn't describe their relationship. As described again later in the chapter about this work, the superimposed clips show different sessions in front of the television, each video showing the couple watching the previous session. There is no conversation and no visual or tactile communication between the two people, sounds are limited to the ticking of a clock and the soundtrack of the projected film. This sound is the voice of Chantal Akerman reading in French above the noises of the cars and subway trains of her film. This voice in a foreign language not only emphasises the lack of close contact between the mother and daughter in Akerman's film but also distances itself from the scene in front of the television screen, the viewer having to rely on subtitles to ensure understanding. The nature of this lack of any communication is not actively explored further in the video, but is left to the viewer to interpret, perhaps by referring to their own experience during the pandemic.

In both *I don't have much news* and Akerman's film there are two protagonists. In the latter the geographical distance between the mother and daughter and obvious incompleteness of their communications – “*tu n'as toujours pas envoyé des photos, pense-y. J'aimerais tant les voir*” – suggest that this distance is deliberate on Akerman's part. The couple watching the film are

physically very close in the same room night after night, but not communicating at all. During the pandemic, according to newspaper reports, cases of domestic abuse rose sharply³⁰, as did inquiries about divorce³¹, both of which evidence difficulties in balancing relationships with the added pressure of having to remain constantly in the same place with the same person (or people) for an indeterminate period. It is here that Sartre's *Huis Clos* comes to mind: how can relationships be managed in these abnormal and restricted circumstances? Who has power over whom?

The central theme of this chapter has been the effect of power in objectifying the less powerful or powerless. One of my original plans for *Body and soul* had been to project a video of images of historic operating and anatomy theatres in the physical setting of a life drawing room in the art school. In all of these settings the stated aim was to educate about the human anatomy, and, in the case of the operating theatre, perhaps also to cure. The power of the body in the centre of each of these settings is far from balanced with that of the other protagonists. The central figure/ patient/ body is the object of the surrounding spectators' gaze and, in the anatomy and operating theatres, powerless. Even if the life drawing model was not compelled to pose, the social status of those working as life models at the same time as the other theatres in this work would have been far inferior to those sketching them.

The study of anatomy has a history intertwined with that of the development of the life drawing room in the art school: studying the human body to understand the bone structure and musculature, for example, was equally important to the ancient physician and to the sculptor. From the earliest formal training as apprentices to the masters and development of art schools, such as the Florentine Accademia del Disegno (1563), students learnt by copying from the work of their masters and from classical sculpture. This developed to having live models in the eighteenth century, as at the Royal Academy of Arts from 1768³². The role of these models, as in much of the art curriculum of the period, was to provide a passive example for the students to copy.

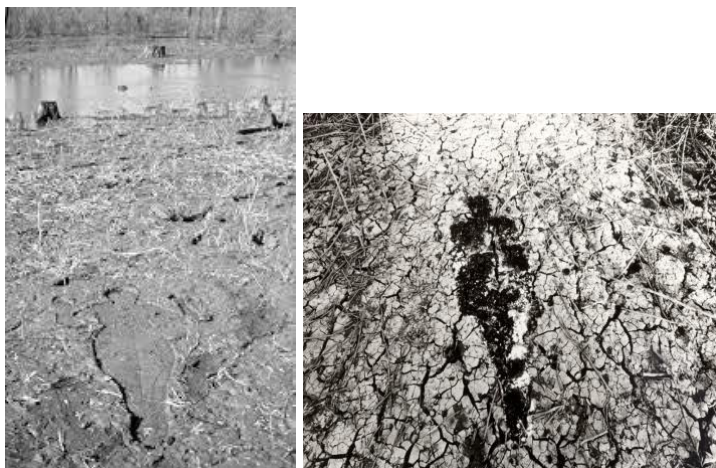
Although life drawing evolved to become freer (and no longer central to the art school curriculum), the role of the model remained passive, without agency, more a body than a real person. However, with the mid-twentieth century explosion of conceptual and performance art along with the new freedoms of the sixties, artists began to use their bodies as material in their work and to question the subject/object dichotomy.

The Cuban artist, Ana Mendieta's work is particularly relevant to this project as part of it, like *Untitled (Rape Scene) 1973* has a resonance with the powerless position of women in the old operating theatre in *Body and soul* and other parts of her work, including the *Siluetas* series (begun in 1973) where the body is no longer there, just traces. Mendieta's work is overtly political, mainly exploring female identity and exile, but the particular performance that is the rape scene emphasises the objectivisation of the body in the hierarchy of power. Just as in the operating and anatomy theatres, bodies of the powerless were used as objects for experiments and dissection, here the woman's body is the object of rape. This example is most sharply invoked by the crude surgery in *Body and soul*.



Untitled (Rape Scene) Tate collection

Her other works are even more relevant to the form of the installation as they are often depicting the absence of a body. The body was present but it is no longer there. In *Body Tracks (1974)* and *Body Prints (also 1974)* she created images of her body by covering it with blood and pressing it against a white wall or into a black shroud, leaving imprints.



Mendieta: examples from Siluetas series

In the *Siluetas* series she left imprints of her body in sand, in mud, in burnt out shapes, with leaves in water or with pigment on rocks. She described these works as a dialogue between the landscape and the female body³³. An exiled Cuban woman, she also refers to her need to return home and tries to find it in the closest possible interaction with the earth. (This also connects with the chapter on affect and place above.) In *Body and soul* there would have been a body on the marble slab or wooden bench or on the drawing room dais but these are made conspicuous by their absence. In the same way Mendieta makes her body conspicuous by the empty imprint it has left.

The strength of the uneven balance of power and inequality of relationships is probably the most important element in the creation of affect in the pieces in this project. This is the final chapter in the part considering affect and how it relates to, or is manifested by, key notions that form the metaphorical and physical elements of the works. It is placed last because those writers and artists I have chosen when considering power and relationships have also been those whose thinking has already been discussed with relation to the ideas in the preceding chapters.

In short, the locus of power may be demonstrated through place and belonging, thresholds and boundaries, and the audible and the unheard. It can also be clearly demonstrated in what is not included, not seen or not heard, particularly in *Body and soul*. In *Still small voice* it is in sharp focus in the scale, the weight of history shaping the threshold and boundaries. In *I don't have much news* it feels more like an echo from the other side of the room's walls, but this echo reverberates more and more strongly in the context of the contemporary wider world where the same questions continue to be asked.

Part 2: the audio-visual installations

This second part focuses on the three audio-visual installations that represent the project. For each one I begin with its inception, what inspired it and why, moving on to gathering material and the development through to the work as finally presented.

The first installation, *Still small voice*, was completed in the summer of 2019 and the first images that would lead to *Body and soul* were collected at the end of that year. The beginning of the pandemic brought the project to a halt and it stalled until late 2020 when it became clear that a different direction needed to be taken by focussing on what was possible during the pandemic. *I don't have much news* eventually emerged from among a series of pieces inspired by that time and was completed in early 2022. I then returned to *Body and soul* which set off in several directions before settling on the work that completes this project.

The linked videos at the beginning of each chapter are spectators' views of the installations. They are not themselves part of the work.

6. *Still small voice*

Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire

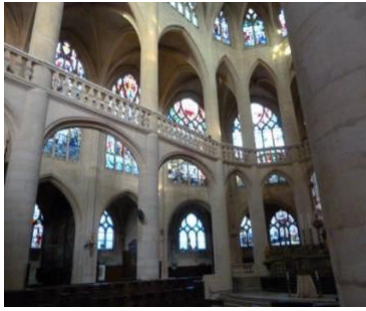
*O still, small voice of calm.*³⁴

Still small voice

As all the pieces in this project, this work is an immersive audio-visual installation of which the site of the installation forms an integral part. The site is both a large lecture theatre with retractable seating and its foyer. Videos are projected onto three of the four walls of the lecture theatre and onto the screen in the foyer. The context of the video footage is described in the introduction to this project.

My starting point for it was a short video taken in the church of St Etienne du Mont in the fifth arrondissement in Paris, into which I had been drawn by the loud, discordant sounds of an organ and an immense, elaborately carved, dark wooden pulpit with an equally elaborate canopy. I was particularly interested in the contrast between this and the quiet simplicity of the small, rural church on which I had based the earlier work that is fully described in the introduction to this project.

A second visit two years later revealed more than the pulpit and organ: the height and architectural grandeur of the church interior provided further layers to my thinking about historical power, about ideas of timelessness and continuity despite the vicissitudes of human life during the centuries since it was built. The idea that the church transcends time is partly evidenced in its seeming permanence in the midst of redevelopment and reconstruction all around and also in what it represents. Built mainly in the 16th Century over a church that originated some four hundred years earlier, St Etienne du Mont is a glorious Renaissance work of art³⁵. Continuing the architectural and theological precepts of the first Gothic cathedrals, such as St Denis in a northern suburb of Paris (discussed above in the chapter on power), built when the invention of flying buttresses enabled buildings to grow exponentially higher and lighter with fine, slender columns and many windows, the church of St. Etienne du Mont is light and delicate.



It is far from oppressive in form but still carries the weight of all that history, expressed literally in the massive pulpit which Samson is carrying on his shoulders.



As discussed in the chapter on frames and thresholds above, the Dutch artist Pieter Saenredam³⁶ painted such interiors when they were comparatively new and modern: active in the first half of the 17th century he is remarkable for his use of mathematical perspective in his sketches and in his combination of viewpoints to create a composition that looks accurate but could not actually have been seen in real life. His techniques resulted in the feeling of great height and of being drawn towards the vanishing point, often the altar, as described by Bergmann and discussed above.

In his chapter on the sublime in his *Critique of Judgement*, Kant described as the mathematical sublime the very inadequacy of the human faculty for estimating the magnitude of

the things in the world of the senses. Saenredam's work exemplifies pictorially the power of the church, of the institution, as do the church and lecture theatres in this project.

Many people seeing Saenredam's paintings were unlikely to have previously known of such buildings so the effect of this technique in enhancing the feeling of great scale and therefore also the grandeur of the church interior would have been even greater. In a period of great faith in God, it would be difficult not to experience a feeling of awe, even though some of his actual pictures are not very large. The notion of awe in the scale of the scene is an effect I was aiming to achieve in this work. I have already discussed Saenredam's work in the context of frames in architectural space and here I was looking at the affect and the effects on perception of the different angles of these videos in projections.

Whilst I was filming, the church was open to the public, so there was a trickle of tourists passing through. There was also someone doing maintenance work that required the use of an electric drill. Outside church bells tolling the hour were heard occasionally amidst the noises of police sirens and motor bikes. I was only aware of the extent of these noises when replaying the videos later and at first thought that they would be detrimental to what I was trying to achieve. As the British artist and academic, Yve Lomax, said in *Sounding the Event*, "So often, I am so busy looking, looking to understand by seeing, that I forget to listen. I forget that I am constantly listening" (Lomax, 2005, p. 23). I had only been hearing the sounds in the context of the videos they accompanied. It was much later that I realised that they were in fact a key element: in all the time I was in the church there was virtually nothing taking place that referred to the religious nature of the space; just a couple of tourists who crossed themselves before passing in front of the altar. But the sounds referred to a great deal of non-religious activity and brought into sharp contrast historical power and modern *laissez-faire*, creating a further link between the videos and the site of the installation (the lecture theatre).

In the work I was looking to convey the dissonance between the historical power of the wealthy, flamboyant Church (the institution) and the simple peace of the small country church.

The sounds of the organ and bells and the architecture of the building contributed to the first element but almost all the activity in my videos could have taken place in any building open to the public, a stately home or museum that interested passing tourists sufficiently for them to

take a disinterested look around and move on. This reflected the notion that, even though contemporary visitors are not necessarily worshippers, they are still drawn to come inside and look around, there is still something about the historical and/or the different that attracts. Lucy Lippard, explaining the attraction to her of the “local”, says she has *“been lured ... by its absence or rather the absence of value attached to specific places in contemporary cultural life ...and in postmodern paradoxes and paradigms”* (Lippard, 1998, p.5).

The return to an interest in the local since Lippard’s writing has been encouraged more by notions of ecology and the carbon footprint than a renewed interest in its historical traces. The only people in the church who were “local” were there to work: the priest, his secretary and the man carrying out maintenance jobs. All the rest appeared to be tourists, as was evidenced in their desultory wander round the building. As there was no service taking place when I was there, I cannot make any further inference about the value attached to the church by the local people.

Having collected footage of the both churches and their sounds, the next element would be the space in which the videos would be projected.



Footprints 2017 the library archives in the Rotunda basement, Winchester

School of Art

Whereas in previous installations the choice of venue, e.g. library archives above, was with the intention of creating an environment that suggested calm, serenity and distance from the clatter of the world, this time I wanted discomfort, perhaps unnerving, the challenge of the overpowering presence of the pulpit and the discordant and unexpected sounds. It seemed that the largest possible space would be suitable – a lecture theatre with the seating retracted would have height, no external light and uninterrupted walls on which to project images. It also brings its own affect. Although it seems to be a neutral space, this is an illusion: positive and negative experiences related to studying, the constraints of the institution, its rules, its deadlines, a forced concentration on the events inside the space as there are no windows and a hierarchy of giving and

receiving knowledge, all these are latent in the affect of the building. So similar to the church in many ways but so different in its presentation of itself to the viewer: a modern construction with modern facilities and ideas.

Both churches and lecture theatres are social spaces. Lefebvre enlarges on this: *“Every social space is the outcome of a process with many aspects and many contributing currents, signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly experienced, practical and theoretical”* (Lefebvre, 1991, p.110).

Furthermore, such social spaces represent time lived. This is very clear in the church, which is a centuries old building which many generations of people have passed through with their individual stories. It is less overt in the modern lecture theatre but it is itself the representative of similar spaces in universities dating back to roughly the same period as the older parts of many churches. The history of churches and universities is intertwined from their architectural beginnings.

Lefebvre asserts that *“with the advent of modernity time has vanished from social space. It is recorded solely on measuring instruments...Lived time loses its form and its social interest”* (Lefebvre, 1991, p.95). I do not hold the same view as I feel that both form and social interest are strongly evident in the spaces that I am composing.

My materials were now all in place for “painting” the picture of an awe-inspiring, overwhelming, noisy, disorienting church but I also needed the counterpoint, the memory of tranquillity and calm.

The moment of silence is very powerful when noise stops. The opposite is also true: in Stoke Charity, the small, rural parish church I had used for previous projects, the silence is made noticeable by what interrupts it – a buzzing fly, the flat popping sound of someone shooting rabbits in a nearby field, the creak of the door opening. Most of the time there is the impression of silence, in spite of unceasing traffic noise in the background, but it is almost brutally interrupted when there is a service, or visitors, or someone using the vacuum cleaner. (Note the comparison with the drill in the French church: present day sounds of activities that have gone on in the church throughout the generations who have taken care of the building.) I had audio footage of this “almost silence” and its interruptions but silence would be difficult to “paint” and made visible alongside the power

of the other composition, especially in a building where there is constant noise of the lights, screen, heating and doors that close slowly until the last second, then they slam. Sufficient silence could not be guaranteed so I needed to look elsewhere.

The final line of the very popular hymn, *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* is “*O still small voice of calm*”, which perfectly exemplifies what this part of the work is about. (This hymn would also have resonance for many non-churchgoers as it is regularly chosen for funerals - maybe not the resonance I was particularly seeking but another affective link with memory and response.) The idea of calm has implications beyond simple lack of sound; it suggests serenity and the possibility of mindfulness – a currently very popular secular form of meditation. It also suggests a break from time, a moment of peace before something powerful happens - perhaps “a calm before a storm”. (e.g. see Turner, *Calm*, 23 April 1812, etching and mezzotint, Tate Collection) where all activity is suspended until the wind enables the ships, and men, to move again.

I would suggest that, contrary to the above, the powerful something is actually taking place during the calm and not after it; this is the moment perhaps of self-realisation, of taking the opportunity to replenish one’s resources ready to return to the demands of the daily world. In view of the seeming lack of meditation in the noise of the French church, this seems to provide a very pertinent contrast. In light of this, a stronger and more emotionally affecting counterpoint than an almost silence would be to hear a beautiful clear solo voice singing this hymn and to contemplate a simple picture recalling the country church. I already knew that the organist at Stoke Charity had exactly the right voice for this and she was willing to be recorded for this project. Whilst she played and sang there was a tree moving gently in a breeze outside one of the windows: this was the picture to accompany the voice.

For the Parisian church sounds I had used the audio recording from the video footage, along with all its peripheral noises. For this recording I chose to use a separate recorder to minimise extraneous sound and synchronise it to the filming.



I now had all the materials – images and sounds from both churches, and an empty lecture theatre. The next stage was to combine these into an artwork.

My original plan had been to make a huge pulpit, either a solid, physical form or a separate, free-standing projection, creating the effect of a collage and real shadows to suggest the long-reaching and heaviness of the messages coming from the pulpit, as well as literally duplicating the overwhelming presence that had first drawn my attention. I doubted my ability to produce something physical of such a scale as was needed in the space of the lecture theatre, but I should perhaps have explored further ways of projecting the pulpit so that it stood out separately and larger than the surroundings. However, this was the first manifestation of the tension between the two sites: the main screen drew the viewer's attention even when nothing was directly projected from it, partly because the audience expects to see images there and partly because anything projected onto the wall without matching its frame to the frame of the actual screen is immediately distorted. It was important that the image of the pulpit was not distorted so I decided to work with the physical aspects of the theatre in this first iteration of the project.

I had, therefore, to simplify my original ideas and come to terms with the fact that my work was likely to be more successful if I adapted my ideas to the geography of the space instead of trying to change the space. If I brought together what the theatre and the church had in common the result would be more natural, a symbiosis instead of an imposition, though the contrasts would still exist. Both were public spaces, imposing a set of formal behaviours. Both were hierarchical, set up so that someone in a position of rank or power would be imparting knowledge to the less knowledgeable, not a conversation between equals but places where people received rather than contributed to learning, where the expert holds a dominant position both physically and mentally. Both had a designated place from which the lecture/sermon would be given and both had rows of chairs at a lower level for the students/congregation.

From Stoke Charity I had audio footage of the hymn and the video taken through the mullioned window, making it clear what the scene of the action was. From the French church, as well as the original clip of the pulpit and organ, I had separate footage taken in the main aisle of the nave, down one side aisle and across the chancel.



St Etienne du Mont, view through nave



View across left side aisle



View down right side aisle

I had had two opportunities for filming: at the end of the afternoon and the following morning. Each of these videos was at least twenty minutes long, taken without interruption with a tripod-mounted camera at roughly waist height. The composition of all three was as symmetrical as possible – it was a surprise later to realise that the altar and chancel were not a straight continuation of the nave – and framed by pillars, very similar to Pieter Saenredam’s compositions. The footage looking down the side aisle was taken using a wide angle to take in as much of the width as possible, whereas I made the ones across the chancel more square to emphasise the geometry of the horizontal lines in the architecture in contrast to the verticals of the columns. In each case the camera ran for about twenty minutes without being moved.

The aim of this was to give the impression of photographic immobility whilst for most of the time only subtle changes in the light gave away the fact that it was not a photograph but a film: a strategy used by Mark Wallinger in *Ever Since* (2012), a life-sized projection of a barber’s shop front in which the only things that appeared to be moving were the barber’s pole outside and the jerking second hand of the clock inside. Wallinger’s composition was a deliberate optical trick, a two second continuous loop replicating the exact time of one rotation of the barber’s pole, but the effect was of time passing and yet standing still.



Mark Wallinger *Ever Since*

A photograph both depicts a moment in time and removes its object from time. Displaying a series of consecutively photographed still images in quick succession, which constitutes a film, creates apparent motion. In these films of the church the unmoving eye of the camera on aspects of the church architecture created an impression of almost stillness referencing the notion of timelessness, breaks in the time/space continuum. Although I would try the effect of using a limited number of frames in a short loop like Wallinger’s piece in a later iteration of this project, my strategy in this instance was not successful. I discovered when replaying my footage that, far from being nearly motionless, there was much movement, however sporadic; people walked in front of the camera,

interrupting the emptiness with a spasmodic eruption of the present.

Later this was used to great advantage when I saw the effect of the projections: seemingly moving ghosts interrupted the stillness and disappeared before they could be clearly distinguished.



Before reaching this point, I had already accepted (re the pulpit) that, if I wanted to have the two places, i.e. the church and the lecture theatre, in harmony with each other, my projections of the videos needed to fit with the structure of the space. If I projected the footage of the nave to fill the front wall beyond the edges of the fixed screen, the place of the pulpit was deformed and difficult to decipher because the projected image overlapped the edges of the screen, which could not be removed. The pulpit was a key to the whole piece, so it was essential that it be very visible. If I used the main screen itself as a lecture, the image was clear and the problem was solved. It also reinforced the formality of both a church and a lecture theatre: the audience/ congregation would be expected to face the front and concentrate on the action there. With this projection nothing further needed doing, the screen showed the images as on the computer without any distortion from the angles of the projection onto the walls. As can be seen in the images below, the pulpit is still dominant, especially as the entrance to the theatre is on the right, the same side as the pulpit, and it is the first thing visitors see, straight in their line of vision.





With the side walls and floor-based projectors, it was physically possible to project across the full height of the wall but this did not sympathise with the projection on the main screen and the scale of the projection resulted in a lack of clarity in the images. Also, the videos have been recorded at waist height, so, with full wall projections, any projected movement took place at the bottom of the wall. It was far more effective to align the bottom of the footage with the bottom edge of the main screen, a line that coincided with the cable covers that extended along both walls. This structure helped create a unity. In the same way I aligned the top of the left-hand side video with the top of the main screen as in the images above.

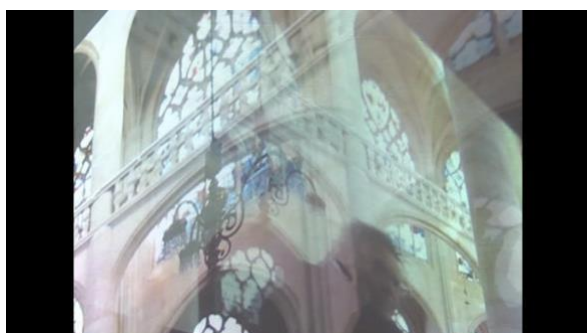
Along the whole length of the right-hand wall there is a large tube so the projection had to be beneath this if it was not to be distorted. I had been interested in the installation decisions made by Christian Marclay, in his piece *Pub Crawl* at White Cube, Bermondsey in 2015. As described above in the chapter re sound, he had taken footage along the gutter and onto the pavement, so he aligned his series of videos with the bottom of the walls and the top edge of the projections at

about shoulder height. This resulted in the viewers looking down into the images of the gutter and bringing their own legs and feet as shadows on the screens as they went past, thus becoming integrated into the piece.

For my installation, projecting the images onto the side walls from projectors on the floor created a very different aesthetic from that on the main screen. A perspective already distorted by my camera position when filming in the church (very low in comparison with the height of the interior) was exaggerated as the image met the wall at an increasingly great distance and ever sharper angles. Each video seemed less clear the further up the wall the image was projected, at the same time appearing to narrow the distance between the pillars framing the image (see the image below). This had the serendipitous effect, in terms of my aims, of keeping the feeling of great height whilst emphasising the oppressiveness of the building closing in on the visitors, effectively engulfing them inside the space even though there was no video of the church on the ceiling.

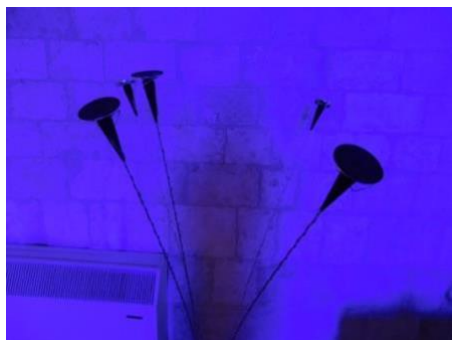


Earlier in this chapter I described the movements on these videos as ghostly figures disappearing before the viewer could locate them. When projected on a small screen these figures looked only too material, as in the image above, but projecting them with a large magnification (and therefore further away from the source) made them appear lighter and hazier, resulting in an impression of ghostliness, perfect for my intention to convey some of the feeling of generations of people coming and going in the church.



This impression was enhanced by my decision to duplicate the videos along the wall: the figures then disappeared into pillars and didn't reappear. Pallasmaa, when discussing the response of different senses to art, commented that "*the preconscious perceptual realm, which is experienced outside the sphere of focused vision, seems to be just as important existentially as the focused image. In fact, there is medical evidence that peripheral vision has a higher priority in our perceptual and mental system*" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 13). It was clear that visitors to the installation regularly responded to the movement of these figures at the edge of their vision, being unsettled or puzzled by their brief presence.

I planned to use the actual soundtracks of the French church videos in my installation. I did not have a separate sound recorder so there was a certain amount of noise from the camera on the recording. Assuming the sounds should be made clearer to be effective in the installation, I removed camera noise and other blurred sounds and enhanced some of the others. However, when played in the lecture theatre, the necessary amplification and the reverberation round the space made the tracks sound false, so I returned to the originals and their comparative authenticity. Brian Eno's 2017 installation, *Light Music*, in the old castle in Trani, southern Italy, drew on both the acoustics of the place and use of technology. The installation comprised five lightboxes showing an almost imperceptibly changing series of blocks of colour and four clusters of loudspeakers, "*speaker-flowers*", each element of which emitted different sounds.



Brian Eno *Light Music* (my images)

In interview³⁷ Eno commented particularly on how he had worked with the acoustics of the space, its swallowing of high frequencies and its echoes, to create the intended sounds. The use of a wide range of speakers allowed him to nuance the sounds emitted depending on their position in the space. Separate loudspeakers enabled me to spread the sound around the space but the acoustics of the lecture theatre had also to be borne in mind; when the seating is in place, sound from the front (the lectern) does not carry well, but without the muffling effect of padded seating, sound spreads more evenly through and across the space. When the seating was retracted, this created a similar effect to that of the disappearing people in the videos – footsteps seemed to come nearer and then go away and the police siren seemed to come from different sides of the church. This effect could be enhanced by adjusting the position and sound output on each speaker.

I kept the sound of the discordant organ from my original clip in the place where it actually had been in relation to the projections of the church. Other sounds could come and go but the organ remained persistently in place like the pulpit, a reminder of the power and the insistent message of the Church as an institution. So much more mobile than the projected images and not confinable to a certain space, sounds can be heard coming from outside and behind the range of peripheral vision. The Australian academic, Douglas Kahn, in his history of sound in the arts, reminds us that *“sounds of adequate intensity can be felt on and within the body as a whole, thereby dislocating the frontal and conceptual associations of vision with an all-round corporeality and spatiality”* (Kahn, 1999, p. 27). The chapter quoted from Kahn was called *Immersed in noise*, as would be the visitor to the installation. I intended that the sound would be loud enough to reinforce the idea that the power of the Church would be overwhelming.

Another attribute of the lecture theatre was its isolation from other spaces and its ensuing sound insulation. As I had discovered from the footage of a funeral in an earlier work and the discovery of the Parisian church because of the noise of the organ emanating from the building, sound is difficult to contain and churches are not constructed with any intention of limiting the extent of noise coming from them. For the purposes of my work, unrestrained sound provided me with the material and an almost sound-proofed space provided the ideal installation space. The noise was effectively kept in place and as a result surprised and disoriented the visitor.

The installation of the material from St Etienne du Mont seemed to be complete except the

addition of a few chairs reflecting the rows of pews in the church. These further integrated the two places visually and the integration was regularly enhanced by visitors who chose to sit and absorb the sights and sounds. I realised later that in all three installations in this project I had made a physical and visual link of the contrasting sites through the seating arrangements.

I had not yet decided where to use the footage from Stoke Charity. I had intended, as discussed above, to use it in the lecture theatre in some kind of break in the other projection. The problem was to create a suitable break in which the almost silence of the hymn could suddenly change the affect of the space. This could have been achieved by synchronising all the different elements and including the Stoke Charity sound on the audio track of one of the videos, but, as I had already realised, this would not have guaranteed the removal of all other sounds. As before, when contemplating the problem of the pulpit, an effective solution was found by working with the materiality of the lecture theatre, so the fact that the whole building was available to me suggested a far more effective solution: the Stoke Charity video would be shown on the big screen in the foyer.



Again, the second place would be superimposed on the first. Although superficially they are the same two places as in the lecture theatre itself, the affects here are very different. A foyer is a transitional space, signalling the literal and metaphorical thresholds between the outside and a social space. There is no expectation that the visitor should take notice of this space beyond preparing for whatever is to take place inside or for rejoining the exterior afterwards. The church, however, expects time to be spent here. The sound is harmonious and contains a story to be heard, the video of the gentle breeze through the church window seems to reflect the natural view

out of the foyer window. This is unsettling and as unexpected as the installation in the theatre when the sound meets the visitor at the door.

The separateness of the two installations was emphasised by the sound of the hymn having the acoustic space to itself before any visitor moved through the insulating double doors into the noise of the other installation. On this occasion I did not want to exploit the "*leakiness*" of sound but to make the contrast between the two as strong as possible.

The complete installation therefore starts at the threshold of the foyer, from which point the visitor is immersed, firstly in the light, airy space where the gentle movement of the tree through the lead mullioned window reflects and contrasts with the trees and buildings in the road outside and the single voice emanates from the speakers above the screen. Lulled by this perhaps meditative introduction, the visitor moves through the heavy doors into the darkness and noise that also purports to be a church.

7. *I don't have much news*

January 2021. It is the first winter of the Covid pandemic. Two people are sitting watching the television again. They are bored. They have had nothing else to do in the evening for months. They have also had no one else to talk to in person since the brief period in which small groups could meet up outside. They have already caught up with any drama series, films, documentaries that they may have missed and any conversation has run dry, so they are now working through their old DVDs, eventually able to view them through the "smart" TV via an old disc player and a laptop: desperate measures but it works, though Chantal Akerman's films aren't necessarily an antidote for boredom.....

I don't have much news 1

I don't have much news 2

As all the pieces in this project, *I don't have much news* is an audio-visual installation but it is made up of two separate installations, each with its own rationale and affect.



The larger part of this work is the screening in a large lecture theatre of a video lasting 11.30 minutes, during which two people are sitting watching Chantal Akerman's 1976 film *News from Home* on a living room television. The superimposed clips show different sessions in front of the television, each video showing the couple watching the previous session. There is no conversation and no visual or tactile communication between the two people, the only voice in the video being that of Chantal Akerman reading in French on the soundtrack of her film. This voice in a foreign language thus distances itself from the scene in front of the television screen and emphasises the lack of sound in the room except the ticking clock.

Gradually four similar videos fade in, superimposed on each other, each one re-framed proportionately smaller than the previous one with the television screen an immobile central point. These are filmed on five consecutive evenings, as can be seen in the clothes worn in each

video, and each shows the same people watching the previous evening's video. Gradually the videos fade out again leaving the couple continuing to watch the film. The film's soundtrack plays throughout alongside the second by second ticking of a grandfather clock.

A smaller second part is the screening of the same video on a desk computer in an office on the same site. The spaces in which the video is shown are integral to the work, providing a contrast between the scale implied by the scenario and the different scales in which it is projected.



In *Still small voice* and *Body and soul* the external elements are superimposed on the site of the installation but in *I don't have much news* the places are brought together more like the different layers of a nest of boxes: within the lecture theatre is the video projection, inside this is the living room, inside this is the television, inside this the film. Finally, in the voice of the daughter reading the mother's letters, the different elements are not only superimposed but fused: as the American film theorist, Jennifer Barker, in her essay on *News from home*, says, "the mother and daughter merge into one" (Barker, 1999, p. 44).

The work was developed during the pandemic in 2020-21, reflecting the limited and repetitive nature of my life during this period. The frames of my life were reduced from the potential scale of the architecture in *Still small voice* to the limitations of my home, occasionally briefly broadened by the possibility of walks in the locality. I accumulated video footage looking out onto a vista of trees whose foliage changed over the periods of lockdown, and the occasional vehicle passed by.



Inside the house I looked at reflections, noting the continuous reinforcement of the limited scene through its endless repetition, the smaller environment of my home becoming the focus of work. The change of scope did not, however, change the aim and rationale of my research project. Working on the affect created by bringing two physical places together, the work would look at the mingling of outside, however that might be represented, and inside when both were restricted by the demands of lockdown.

Since this project would now be determined by a more personal script than in previous work, I need to define what lockdown meant for me. As for most people, it meant a total change of life style: almost no interaction with anyone but my husband and limited movement outside the house. Most days followed the same pattern: indoor activity in the morning, a long walk away from other people in the afternoon and television/reading/music in the evening. A routine of non-movement or slow, individual movement through or in very specific spaces, either actually inside the house or weaving a careful path at least two metres away from anyone else outside. It became a time of individual rhythms, dictated by solitary footsteps and the tempo of clocks ticking in comparative silence.

What would I now document? In the style of de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, discussed in the chapter on place, I looked closely at my living space, taking video footage to see if anything seemed to stand out as representative of this new life style. Preliminary filming showed that wherever I was in the house there was always the sound of the grandfather clock. The position of the clock was also interesting as it is central within the space but only clearly visible at a limited angle. (It appears on the left edge of the images above and on the right side of the one below.) Thus, its sound permeated everywhere whilst its physical presence was minimal.

There was an inexorability about its ticking away every second. Time during lockdown seemed more elastic: long, slow periods with no appointments, no social activity, yet with hindsight time seemed to have disappeared without a trace as no events marked its passing. There was nothing to distinguish one day, or one week, from another so they drifted away. But here was the clock, measuring time at exactly the same speed through days, nights, weeks, even months. The clock provides the strongest link between the works developed in this period, serving as a visual and,

more importantly, an audible keystone or bass line as described by Jean Starobinski (quoted by Augé, 1995, p. 61) and quoted above in the chapter on place.



The architecture of the house proved particularly serendipitous for filming: the open plan living area enabled cameras to be placed at a distance from the chosen space in a way that would not be possible in a traditional configuration of separate rooms, thus creating the impression of a film or stage set with an invisible fourth wall. Film footage from inside the dining area looking out could be tightly framed not only by the interior walls but also by the frames of the French windows. Footage focussing on the living room area fitted in the frame of its three walls. The grandfather clock stands on the edge of each scenario, the visible and audible link between the two spaces. The framing of the spaces is further discussed later in this chapter and in the earlier chapter on frames and thresholds.

With no opportunity to be anywhere during the evenings, other than home without company, except whoever formed the rest of the household, a lot of time was spent in the living room space. For us, watching television soon became a ritual, even more so as we set limits on the amount of time just sitting passively. Therefore, anyone able to look in between certain times any evening would have seen exactly the same scenario, differentiated only by any changes of clothing and what was on the screen.

This limited view reminded me of the work of the filmmaker, Chantal Akerman, in general, but especially *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) which details dispassionately and in what feels like real time the mundane daily activities of the eponymous protagonist. In an interview in 2004, Akerman told the interviewer that “*everyone thought that Jeanne Dielman was in real time, but the time was totally recomposed to give the impression of real time*” (Rosen, 2004, no page reference). She went on to describe how she directed some actions to be carried out more slowly and some more quickly than the actors were naturally doing them because the

changed pace would seem more real to the viewer than the real one was.

This perceived lack of engagement in any emotion either by the actor or the filmmaker creates an affect of such pointlessness it is almost despair. My concern, however, is not with the psychology of Jeanne's behaviour that eventually leads to stabbing and breakdown, but with the effect on the viewer of these long shots of the trivial, the endless almost identical repetitions of the same actions and the limited setting. An early idea for this project was to use the scenes in *Jeanne Dielman* where Jeanne is preparing food, meals that seem almost the same every day. One of these scenes would appear each night as the couple watched the television screen night after night. The effect of using this was a further closing of the scene within itself, which worked well in reinforcing the claustrophobic nature of lockdown constraints. However, it also introduced another two different set of relationships beyond the couple watching the television – Jeanne's relationship with her son and that with her clients – which would have taken the work in a very different direction from that I had in mind. My aim in this work was to show the impact of the outside world (a second place) on the microcosm of the living space and make the visual contrast by showing the outside world on the small screen. By so doing I would reverse the normal order, the sizes of the inside and outside worlds being interchanged.

Akerman's New York based film, *News from Home*, would create this contrast with long takes of aspects of life in New York in the 1970s. Akerman had used the same techniques with even less action in *Hôtel Monterey* (1972), where long takes down empty corridors would have also fitted my scenario, this time emphasising the emptiness of the outside world, exemplified by the hotel, whilst everyone was shut up inside their homes. Superficially, *News from Home* (1976) seems to be the least appropriate with its New York setting and actual activity but proved to provide the ideal contrast of place and affect to include in my planned works combining two contrasting places to create a third with its own affect. The first place was the living room, the second the views of New York on the television screen. Whilst the use of *Jeanne Dielman* reiterated the limited scope of life during the pandemic, *News from Home* would emphasise a lack of real connection with the wider world by showing it at the distance created by the small television screen.

The title of this work is taken from the English subtitles to the film in order to emphasise a personal lack of activity: the first person pronoun could refer to one of the people in the living room. I chose the version in which the monologue is in French with subtitles in English: Akerman made a second version in which she reads from her own translation in English. The French version better emphasises

the great distance between the provenance of the script and the film and, in practical terms, the French is in fact slightly easier to follow with subtitles than the accented English version. This monologue consists of letters written to Akerman by her mother in Belgium and read by Akerman herself in what was still a heavily accented Belgian accent, whilst the film itself is composed of a series of long takes of scenes of New York streets and in the subway.

The reading is sometimes drowned out by vehicle noise as the sounds of the two worlds overlap. Michel de Certeau's thinking on the development of affect in urban development is discussed in the chapter on place above but, in his chapter on train travel, although he is talking about the view from inside the train, he described the disjunction created by the different realities either side of the train's window panes: "*Between the immobility of the inside and that of the outside a certain *quid pro quo* is introduced, a slender blade that inverts their stability. The chiasm is produced by the windowpane and the rail.....these are two complementary modes of separation. The first creates the spectator's distance: you shall not touch; the more you see, the less you hold – a dispossession of the hand in favor of a greater trajectory for the eye*" (De Certeau, 1988, p. 112). This disjunction is key to both Akerman's film and to my use of her work in my own.

There is a disjunction between the visual and the aural that accentuates both the literal and metaphorical distance between the daughter, who clearly only communicates partial details of her experience, and the mother, who struggles to understand her daughter's life. Further distance and disjunction are created by Akerman's choices of viewpoint, framing and length of shots and by her lack of interaction with her subjects. Although the imported places are in reality far bigger than the place they come into, in this scenario they seem small, distant and unreal, reflecting the limited visual scope of lockdown life. Aural scope is also severely curtailed, as the soundtracks to these works testify, the loud noises emanating from New York roads and subway providing an uncomfortable, discordant contrast to the clock ticking endlessly in the quiet room.

The notion of home is pertinent to this whole project, especially in searching for an understanding of place through affect. That the experience of home colours one's interpretation of the word is fundamental in both Akerman's film and my work. In this work my world dwindles to the confines of the home to the extent of it becoming almost a prison. In *News from home* there is the family home from which Akerman has absented herself and the adopted home she is finding in New York. In neither of these is she "at home": that of the mother's letters seems very small and distant and that of the filmed images seems to hold itself at arm's length, or at least the camera lens' distance

away. Barker describes Akerman's view of New York as "*a dwelling in the most intimate, visceral sense of the word...As the title suggests, the film investigates the notion of 'home' and origins; the attention paid to urban space and the act of dwelling leads to a discovery of 'home' within what appears to be 'homelessness'*" (Barker, 1999, p. 41-58). This is not what I see. I see the camera standing for Akerman stubbornly facing a world that has little or no interest in the camera, or Akerman, just the occasional curiosity but no more. This is the isolation of the pandemic – you cannot connect.

The viewpoint and framing Akerman uses in this film complement other works in this project and are further discussed in the chapter on frames and thresholds with particular reference to films and to the work of Edward Hopper again. Access to the outside world through the rectangular screen, whose size in my video decreases as the scenes are superimposed and are then projected onto the lecture theatre screen, is reminiscent of the view through the squint with which this project began. As the scale of the outside and inside worlds are reversed, so is the effect of the double squint, looking inward instead of out.

I have chosen a specific section of the film as the basis for my work for both its particular content and its aesthetics - the shape of the shots and its sound. It also has a logical beginning and end. The section starts with a long shot up a road lined by cars, filmed so that the vanishing point is in the centre of the image and the section ends with a similar long shot along a subway platform filmed at the same angle, reminiscent of the Candida Höfer photographs that I reference across the works in this project. In between there are scenes taking the same view down subway corridors. In counterpoint to these the other scenes are at right angles to the lines, or stairways and lifts (just visible before the second layer fades in), creating grids and actions like camera shutters as trains come and go and the scenes behind change. Some of this is visible before the next layer of the video covers it up and only the sound informs of changes until the film is visible again at the end.

The work of Edward Hopper has been referred to several times already, in the chapters on place and on frames and thresholds, and it is equally relevant here in terms of its disconnect/objectivity – views as if from vehicle windows. Margaret Iversen links Hopper even more directly with Akerman: in her article she aims

to show that Hopper and Akerman represent a depersonalized and contingent view of the world by using the window of a train or car as an automatic framing device on wheels. For

both, modes of transport are turned into vehicles of perception in which chance and accident become productive. They frequently adopted an implied point of view from a slowly moving or temporarily stationary vehicle. I say 'slowly moving' in order clearly to distinguish my interest in the framing function of train and car windows from the artistic rendition of speed in blurry impressionist and fragmentary cubo-futurist painting. The effects of framing I have in mind are compatible with the oft-remarked stillness of Hopper's images (Iversen, 2018).

As the section starts two boys are practising with baseball bat and ball – one of the few moments of genuine interaction between people in the film. After that, other than a young couple embracing before the woman leaves in the train, there is very little other interaction as everyone goes about their business in their own metaphorical bubble and the section ends with the platform emptying into a departing train, leaving a man alone. This echoes the time after lockdown started and we were all in bubbles, often alone.

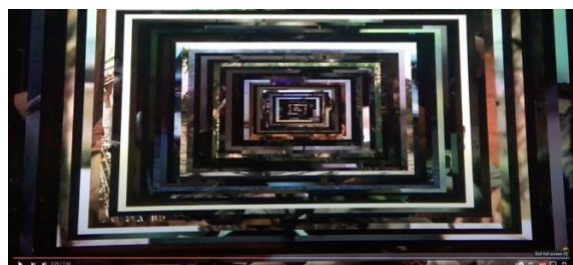
The film theorists Elsaesser and Hagener, in a chapter on cinema as skin and touch, quote a character from Paul Haggis' 2004 film, *Crash*, talking about Los Angeles, but it could also apply to New York: *"it's the sense of touch. In any real city, you walk, you know? You brush past people, people bump into you. In L.A. nobody touches you. We're always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much that we crash into each other, just so that we can feel something"* (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010. p. 108). In much of the world of Akerman's films there is almost no interpersonal touch and in *News from home* not only is there little connection between the camera and the people it catches as they pass (with the notable exception of the scene inside the subway train in which a passenger stares at the camera for some time before making a show of moving down the train away from the unwavering lens) but very little between the people themselves. One moment in the film shows a woman walking towards the camera in the subway grasping a very small child by the hand. The child is struggling to walk fast enough but not once in the time the woman takes to walk the length of the corridor does she communicate with the child. The people are all immersed in carrying out their separate lives without communicating with each other, even unintentionally.

This lack of contact, both physical and emotional, was reflected back into my life during the pandemic: keep at least two metres apart, do not meet up in groups of more than six etc. This is

then reflected again in *I don't have much news* where, night after night, the two people sit in their respective chairs at some distance without communicating.

The academic, Ivone Margulies, suggests, re *Jeanne Dielman*, that these “long takes, with little in the way of action, elicit a hyperacute perception, in which one recognises both the image’s literal and its representational aspects (Margulies, 1996, p. 44). By using Akerman’s film on an unmoving television in a scenario where there is indeed very little action, I am referencing her regular strategy whilst in fact using an extract from her most action-infused work. My aim in this was to show the disconnect between lockdown activity and normal activity, albeit from a different time and place. Margulies goes on to say that “duration and the sense of rigor that derives from her unchanging compositions and limited number of camera setups are critical in establishing the feeling of a wavering between “illusion” and “fact”.

The technique of nesting videos inside each other had been suggested to me by Christian Marclay’s work, *48 War Movies*, for the Venice Biennale 2019, in which he has superimposed 48 films, all playing simultaneously and only the smallest, central one being wholly visible, though in fact too tiny to see clearly.



48 War Movies (screenshot from YouTube)

As the outer rim of films is bigger they seem clearer and nearer so the diminishing dimensions give an effect as if looking more and more deeply into a tunnel. I started experimenting with this idea with images looking out of the window wall but found that, unlike Marclay’s ever changing soundtracks and visuals all over the screen, the movement in my experiment was confined to the centre and so gradually almost disappeared, leaving most of the screen immobile. If this technique was to be successful in my work, there needed to be some movement, however small, through the superimposed videos.

Therefore, I looked at images looking into the space instead of out of it and moved into the living room area.

The framing of the video itself was simply provided by the serendipitous architecture of the space: three walls delineated the area clearly, leaving the “fourth wall” space for the camera without the restrictions of distance and viewpoint that traditional architecture would have required. From outside the space with the television screen as a fixed central point the rest of the composition was dependent on how much of the scene was needed within the frame. This was decided by what remained in the frame created by the superimposition of the following video: sufficient of each edge for objects still to be clear and to create patterns as the videos gradually accrued. Experiments with the camera closer so that the television screen and the viewers were larger resulted in unsatisfactory frames with only partial edges of objects showing when the videos were collated. Too far away resulted in the images on the screen being very difficult to make out after the second video.

Important to the work was the notion of repeated actions, so the videos would be of consecutive evenings watching the same screen, emphasising this repetition by watching the same film every evening. A more likely scenario would have to be seen watching a different film each evening but this brought comparatively random scenes to each video, losing the impact of the continuing film as the consecutive videos faded in and the action on the screen kept moving. This continuing film effectively made the action feel even more constricted as so little changed with the passage of time. Aesthetically this choice was more successful for several reasons: the matching framing of the scenes from the film beginning and ending the video provided mirrored entry and exit points. Furthermore, the proportions of the people and buildings, the colour palette and sound remained constant.

The passage of time, in this period slowly and uneventfully, was more clearly marked by the contrasting time scales of the film, only eleven minutes but spread over five evenings, and the slow, minimised movements of the couple watching the film. Occasionally a head is slightly shaken or a toe wriggled and the distance travelled is limited to getting up to press the play button.

In *I don't have much news* I originally planned to superimpose the soundtrack from each video in the same way as I did the visual elements. This worked for the first superimposed layer as both were still distinguishable but after that the camera microphone began to fail to make any discrimination and the sound turned into various high-pitched squawks and whistles. This could have been used to suggest a gradual unravelling of the script of my life as the pandemic grew but the

reality did not feel like that: it was more like a gradual thinning out of sounds and an unnerving calm as some things continued just as if nothing had changed. I therefore decided to keep just the soundtrack of the first evening's video, where there were just the film sounds accompanied by the ticking of the clock. This video completes the first element of the installation, corresponding to the footage of the churches in *Still small voice* and the medical theatres in *Body and soul*.

The second element of this work, corresponding to the large and small lecture theatres in the other works, is the place of its installation. Originally I had viewed the video itself as potentially the third place: the living-room and the Akerman view of New York constituting the two combined places creating a third. This was when the controls of the pandemic were still not totally behind us and I then saw the possibility of uploading the video on social media so that it then created a third scene within a scene when viewed somewhere else on their phone. The practicality of evidencing this is something I may still work on but, in the meantime, places opened up and the possibility of exploring contrasts in scale as in *Still small voice* became an option.

The content of this work lacks the scale and the potential to shock or at least disturb any visitor - no possibility of realising an affect dependent on layers of history and experience and a feeling of dislocation as in both *Still small voice* and *Body and soul*. Instead, this work picks up the themes of what place means in terms of home and belonging and that of power and relationships. Both of these themes have potential for unsettling memories and difficult experience which is also very recent. This resulted in two separate venues being explored – a small office and a large lecture theatre.

My intention was to continue the idea of isolation and semi-imprisonment in a small space by playing the footage on a computer monitor in an empty office on the university campus. Normally in term time, walking beside this building and the car park, I would see various administrative staff and academics working on computer screens. Their desks were placed at an angle to the window, making the people face inwards to the screen, the content of which would be clearly visible to those walking past except for any reflections in the window. However, for most of the time during the making of this video only very few people were allowed on campus – for several months the only people in the art school were myself, another research student and the security staff. All offices were empty as everyone was working from home.

Since no one expected that this would last very long they had left personal items such as coffee mugs and tea bags along with books they might have been using for their research etc. This reminded me of Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment* (first installed in his own apartment in 1985). In this installation, all the evidence of someone's presence is there, as well as detail of the work they were involved in – the project to fly into space – and the neighbours' statements providing a detailed back story. Almost completely boarded up (depending on the installation site), the apartment is not easily accessible to the viewer who has to peer through gaps in the boards to see different parts of the space.



(Tate Modern 2018 my image)

This limited view refers once again to the double squint: either looking inwards or outwards, into the television screen projected in the big lecture theatre or peering through the office window to glimpse the video, the outside or inside world is attainable only through a constrained frame that denies a complete view. Not only would the view be limited but there would be very few people to notice what was on the screen. Although the computer stations in the offices are now restored to their users, the continuing option of working from home means that the offices are still half empty and the video can continue to play undisturbed. What is the result of using this space as the completing element of this piece? It reinforces the smallness of the world of the pandemic whilst drawing the viewer into the scene and very much through the double squint. A further, unexpected element in this part of the installation is the sound – mainly birdsong, it reminds us of the completely different balance of noises we hear in “normal” times compared with what we could hear when the noises of human business were interrupted.

In contrast a large rectangular screen in a large rectangular lecture theatre with rows of empty seats repeating the repeated seats in the video creates further layers to the five already showing on the screen: the view gradually narrows until the outside world of Akerman's New York is almost lost to view. This tight and repeated framing references the works of such artists as Candida Höfer above and was what reminded me of the notion of the parergon, discussed in the chapter of

frames, and which Derrida describes as “*neither work nor outside the work ...it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work*” (Derrida, 1978, p. 9).

The contrast between the spaces of the lecture theatre and the living-room is brought into sharp relief on the big screen, something so small seeming incongruous when so greatly enlarged. It also has the effect of forcing the lecture theatre to seem to reduce its own proportions to accommodate the new scale of the on screen living-room. This creates a third place where both elements adjust to complement each other, however incongruously.

8. Body and soul

The corpse - seen without God and outside science - is the height of abjection. It is death infesting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one is not separated, from which one is not protected as is the case with an object. An imaginary strangeness and a menace that is real, it calls to us and finishes by devouring us (Kristeva, 1982, p.133).

Body and soul 1

Body and soul 2

This work is a two part audio-visual installation in two differently configured lecture theatres which, as in all the works in this project, are themselves part of the installation. The installation centres on the absence of a physical body, alive or dead, whilst nothing in this work would exist without one. Although clearly pertinent to the topic of this particular work, Julia Kristeva's words above serve to remind me of themes present throughout this project, especially those concerning power and relationships and the responses I bring to my experience of these. The piece itself brings together several iterations with similar intent. The final installation for this project will consist of two of these versions of the same subject. The original version is described in this chapter but was eventually discarded, the reasons for which are also described as they explain its development.

As in *Still small voice* and *I don't have much news*, audio-visual footage is projected in a specific place which brings its own connotations and therefore affect to influence the response to the video subject. An aim of this piece was to create an installation which draws together themes that would also be key to the project as a whole whilst placing the installation unequivocally in the art school itself. This is not so in the other pieces: the lecture theatres which provide the physical structure and second space for the other two works could have been in any college or university.

My original intention for the whole project was to choose different places that had the capacity to reflect some elements of the chosen places for the audio-visual footage even though they first and foremost contrasted with them in their usage and history. For this work I considered the council chamber in Winchester Castle. Its configuration has similarities with the medical theatres and it has both a historical site and long history of usage. However, what it is used for is very different

and the superimposition of footage of medical theatres where bodies would have been on the central table would have created a strong affect of dislocation. The advent of the pandemic prevented my continuing with this idea so, instead of returning to it later and because this piece would now be the concluding one in the project, I decided to continue with the choice of lecture theatres or other spaces at Winchester School of Art for the site of the installation.



Hampshire County

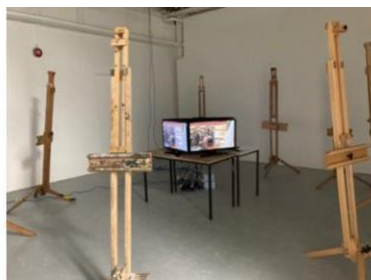
Council Chamber in Winchester Castle



The first version of the work in the art school drew its original inspiration from the development of Nam June Paik's works with Charlotte Moorman, where Moorman's body appears naked or covered in transparent material, through to works such as *Aunt* and *Uncle* (1986), where he replaced the body with television monitors.

In all the works in this project, the viewer is invited to come in and even sit down, but not passively in the first iteration of this piece— the invitation to participate would be clear in the materials beside the stools and easels. This is a life drawing room, complete with a dais for the model. There is no model. Instead there are 5 television screens joining to form a pentagon and facing outward. On these screens played a video of footage from an eighteenth century anatomy theatre and a nineteenth century operating theatre. The videos could be synchronised so that the same image was on every screen at the same time. If I had continued to develop this installation the television monitors would have stood on a round plinth about 30cm higher than in the images below so that an artist standing at an easel would be looking straight at the video instead of down at it. Easels would have been crowded into the space so that seeing a screen clearly would require

the artist to peer between others as it would have been in both early life drawing rooms and operating theatres. Paper and charcoal would have been available at each easel. This is not a version that I eventually retained, for the reasons outlined below.



Once in place as in the photographs it was clear that this did not succeed in creating an affect that brought together those of the different elements – in fact it lacked any affect at all. In *Still small voice* and *I don't have much news* a similar combination resulted in installations that felt resolved. Why wasn't that so in this case? I think the main answer lay in the fact that all of the elements were constructions: the anatomy and operating theatres were represented through video footage, further separated from the viewer by the contrived arrangement of small screens, and the life drawing room was a re-creation in a neutral space – a sculpture studio.

This space had been chosen because it was used occasionally for life drawing classes but had no authenticity as a space known to have this use, was simply a windowless white box. In the other works the presentation in lecture theatres was acknowledging the lecture theatres themselves as integral to the work. In this case the space was unable to contribute to the whole.

Although this would perhaps have created a complete central installation, somewhat like the homeless shelters in Jana Sophia Nolle's work described below, it was not complemented by the connotations brought by the site of the installation: in Nolle's work the key was the contrast between the installation and where it found itself. Here the space had nothing to contribute.

So I looked at different spaces in the art school and decided that using the lecture theatres would provide a visual and connotational link between all the works and have an authenticity lacking in the constructed life drawing room. The iterations finally included in this project consist of two

versions of the video footage used above screened in two very different teaching spaces – the smallest of the three lecture theatres at the art school and a conference suite. Both of these provide an authentic counterpoint to the audio-visual footage – it remains to be seen how successfully these contribute to the combined affect.



The physical inspiration for the work was a visit to the Old Operating Theatre Museum and Herb Garret at London's St. Thomas' Hospital. It had been constructed in 1822 in the attic of St Thomas' church and adjacent to the women's ward of the hospital. Predating the discovery and use of anaesthetics and antiseptics, the operations were mainly amputations or caesarean sections and, if the patient didn't die of shock, she was likely to die from massive loss of blood or an infection. The survival rate from operations was low, especially in hospitals themselves, where only the poor were treated: the wealthy sent for the doctor to come to their homes. However, the patient was relatively unimportant in comparison with the eminent surgeons demonstrating their skills to the medical students and other interested parties who bought tickets to fill the seats surrounding the theatrical arena. The operation was a spectacle as in any other theatre, with the extra value in this particular show that the central character was a live specimen: this was a rare opportunity to witness a surgical operation on a living patient.

Student doctors still normally learnt about the human anatomy from dead bodies and anatomy theatres were a usual feature of medical school provision. The corpses would often be those of hanged convicts, vagrants and others whose families could not afford a proper burial. The construction of a theatre devoted to operating on living patients was a modern development. Its opening was exactly contemporaneous with the scandal of Burke and Hare who were convicted in Edinburgh of killing at least sixteen people during 1827 and 1828 to sell to a lecturer, Dr. Robert Knox, in the university anatomy department for dissection.

The operating theatre itself is simply constructed with tiers of wooden benches and balustrades surrounding the operating table on three sides. It was built in the attic of the church so that

windows could be made in the roof to maximise the natural light. There is no ornamentation and the theatre is reached by a narrow spiral staircase at the side of the church door, though originally there would also have been an entry from the adjacent ward. In spite of this lack of decoration and comfort the theatre seems regularly to have been packed with *“a gaping audience and ... a conscious victim, quivering, terror-stricken, and palsied with expectation”*³⁸. This is a quotation from Dr. Frederick Treves, writing in 1900, who described an early 19th-century surgeon in this manner: *“He stepped into the arena of the operating theater as a matador strides into the ring.”*

The patient would have been held down or strapped to the scrubbed wooden bed and straw would have been strewn over the floor to soak up blood and other bodily fluids. In such a small space the smell must have been overpowering.

(39)



Even if the body was still alive after the operation, the powerlessness, lack of privacy, lack of any acknowledgement of their humanity, these all fit Kristeva’s description of the abject corpse. In fact, it is perhaps even more apposite in this context than in the case of actual corpses in the anatomy theatres which contribute the second element to this work.

Operating and dissecting spaces were rightly called theatres as they were often constructed in the same form as traditional actors’ theatres with tiered seating in at least a semi-circle. Although the only early theatre built specifically for conducting operations and extant in Europe is St Thomas’s, there are several, much older anatomy or dissecting theatres remaining in their original form. I have been able to visit three: the oldest, in Padua, is small and circular, that in Bologna is oblong and the one in Barcelona, the Sala Gimbernat, is big, almost circular and ornate with a high gallery as well as the tiered seating below. An exploration of these theatres found that the one in Padua was so

tightly constructed that it was difficult to film (any pictures available seem to be from above and strongly artificially lit) and Bologna's oblong theatre, although sumptuous and naturally lit, lacked the impression of surrounding and looking down on the body. The Sala Gimbernat, in contrast, provided possibilities of filming both from above and within the space and the sumptuousness of the furnishings and décor would make a striking contrast to the simplicity of St Thomas'. Furthermore, the luxury of the surroundings would enhance the sense of powerlessness of the central object of the dissection.



Padua



Bologna



Sala Gimbernat, Barcelona

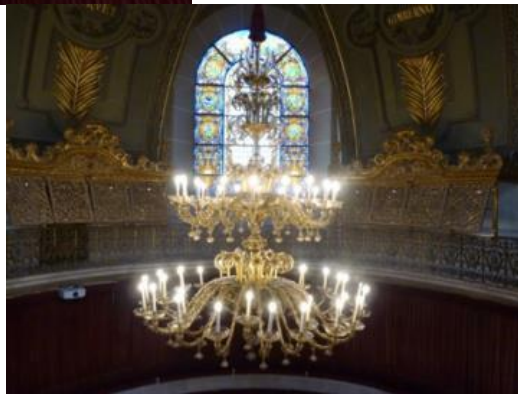


Although there had already been a wooden theatre on the site in Barcelona for over a century, that had been left to decay until a new injection of money into medical training brought back the need for an anatomy theatre and the new one, built in the 1760s, remains very much unchanged today, including the original huge crystal chandelier and stained glass windows. It is therefore much less a historical monument than those in Padua and Bologna, which were inaugurated in 1595 and 1637 respectively, but more a reflection of the wealth and taste of its time. The theatre is part of the Royal College of Surgeons of Catalunya, whose historic buildings now house the college archives, are used as a venue for college members' meetings and can be booked for conferences by other organisations.

Both the London and Barcelona theatres were constructed to optimise available light, in London in the roof of the church and in Barcelona under its imposing dome. Where artificial light was needed the contrast was no less striking between the simple gas lamp and the flamboyant chandelier.



Old Operating Theatre, St Thomas'



Sala Gimbernat

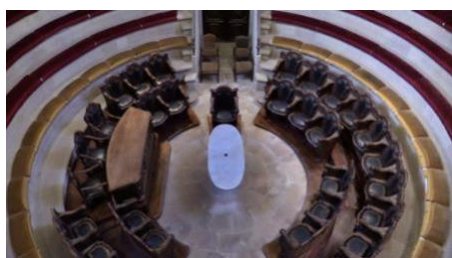
These buildings, in which the suffering of one group of people benefited the education or simply the wish for entertainment of another group, demonstrate another view of power: at its simplest, *Still small voice* explores the power of the Church, *I don't have much news* the power of the state and relationships and this third project emphasises the huge, stark contrast between the power of wealth and the abject powerlessness of poverty. Only the wealthy could afford the education to become doctors and only with money could patients expect to be treated with some dignity in the privacy of their own home. The anatomy theatres were as much the sites of public spectacles as the operating theatres. As Anna Jamieson⁴⁰ says, *jostling crowds and competing academic factions meant that getting a good seat was tricky*".

A person with the means to avoid it would be very unlikely to end up on the marble slab or the wooden bench.

This project also continues my interest in the combination of affects of places which freight history and human experience, and literally references the notion of embodied affect. An extra

dimension is the presence (or not) of a human body: in this scenario learning is not being dispensed from the pulpit or lecturer's dais but comes out of the exposure of the human body which is physically central to the proceedings. In this scenario the spectators are not looking up to the source of learning but down to it. In the operating theatre the spectators were receiving information derived from a living body. This body, this human being, was consenting to being a public spectacle, perhaps, but probably without any viable alternative options as they and their family were unlikely to have the means to deal with their suffering in any other way. In the anatomy theatre the corpse being dissected would also have been poor or a convicted criminal (bodies of hanged convicts were regularly sent for dissection), if not illegally disinterred for sale, and no personal consent would have been given.

Although in the operating theatre the surgeon himself would be carrying out the operation, in the anatomy theatre the gulf between the status of the teacher and the "specimen" was further widened by the fact that the professor would not personally be carrying out the dissection: he would be lecturing whilst someone else undertook the physical work. In the Sala Gimbernat this professor and his most eminent colleagues would be seated on the most sumptuous chairs in front of the ornately carved table. Less eminent doctors and teachers would fill up the remaining rows of comfortable seats whilst everyone else would find places on the tiers of solid seating rising up round the theatre. Standing space was also available in the gallery. The body would be on the marble dissecting table in the centre. The hierarchy of power and relationships could not have been more clearly defined.



A similar hierarchy, one that continues to exist today, is questioned by Jana Sophia Nolle. Her work has similarities to Parker's and Whiteread's (see particularly the chapter on place) in that she uses specific buildings or constructions but her finished work is photographs of the combination of these places. In her work, *Living Room, San Francisco 2017-18* (Nolle, J. 2020, Berlin: Kerber), she has rebuilt the shelters of homeless people inside the opulent rooms of wealthy San Franciscans (and, more recently, Berliners, a continuing development exhibited in 2022 in Portland, Blue Sky

Gallery, and now including work in Paris) and documented these in photographs.



04 San Francisco

The very separateness of the two elements of her compositions states very clearly her messages including the inequality of resources (as well as permanence and transience in current Western society). Her compositions resemble those of Candida Höfer (discussed in the chapter on frames and thresholds) in their framing, stillness, absence of people and the scale and, as such, do have a distinct affect. Similar to the strength of the affects of such places as churches, theirs also seem to lie in the experience, conscious or subconscious, of the viewer and the history of the buildings or the activities inherent to them.

This work not only uses a hierarchy of dwellings to show the sumptuousness of wealth looking into the lack of resources and instability of the poor as in *Body and soul* but also creates a link and contrast with *I don't have much news* with the tightness of its framing and a world confined within the single space. In Nolle's photographs her places stand clearly and separately, without a shadow to blur their individuality, but are fused by becoming two dimensional images. In an interview⁴¹ she calls her images "*an inventory, a typology of improvised dwellings, cataloging their various attributes... [and touching] on larger phenomena of socio-political changes, housing shortages, exclusion and gentrification going far beyond San Francisco. How much is our home, whether house or tent, the determining factor for selecting our social group? How much does being homeless define somebody who might also be intelligent, creative and social?*" In these comments we again turn full circle back to Foucault's thinking as discussed in the chapter on place above.

In the life drawing room the model is placed centrally or within the converging ends of a horseshoe

shape and can be seen from every side; in the same way in Nolle's work the actual models she uses are placed in the centre of rooms that have been emptied of most of their furnishings so these structures can be seen from all sides, there are no parts hidden from view. We have the image of a panopticon, though not in fact as Nolle's actual work is the photography, and return to Foucault's thinking again.

The life drawing room was a focal point in the traditional European art school, still exists in such schools as Bologna (as does the anatomy theatre described at the beginning of this chapter) and has been retained as a museum piece in the Royal Academy in London. As described in the chapter on power and relationships, for centuries a basis of training as an artist was the study of the human form, either by copying classical sculptures or drawing from a life model.

Similarly, those training to be doctors studied the human form and its structure through classes in anatomy. In Britain the Royal Academy Schools was the first institution to provide professional training for artists, whose programme of training was based on the principles outlined by the RA's first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his lectures at the RA. In these *Discourses*⁴², Reynolds stressed the importance of copying the Old Masters, and of drawing from casts of classical sculptures and from the life model. Of the first four professorial chairs created at the schools, one was for anatomy⁴³.

Developing theories about the role of education, and therefore the curriculum, during the second half of the twentieth century triggered a change in approach at all levels of education. Less fact based and more experiential and explorative, this change of priorities affected the teaching in art and medical schools in the same way. Close study of the human form lost its pre-eminence as a key element of the basic training of either an artist or a doctor.

At the same time the political and cultural revolutions in the nineteen-sixties opened up possibilities of new freedoms in life styles for many people and particularly in art and music. The artists creating the mid-century development of body and performance art took this opportunity to use their own bodies as described in the chapter on power and relationships above, often shocking and sometimes involving violence and self-harm. This makes a strong link between the originally planned site of the installation (the life drawing room in the art school) and the actions

that could be taking place in the sites on the screens as surgeons wielded their scalpels and saws, and bodies were cut open to display the internal organs during dissections.

Nam June Paik has been quoted above for his work with the musician, Charlotte Moorman, playing her cello semi or totally nude. He also figures in the chapter on affect and sound above. A dimension of his later work with Moorman is relevant to the development of this particular project: his sculptural installations using television screens. First as musical instruments, for example *TV Cello* (1971) where Moorman's cello is replaced by three television monitors, to *Internet Dream* (1994) where he installs fifty-two television monitors on a steel wall system with three video channels. Moorman's body has completely disappeared and been replaced by mechanical objects.

In whatever variation on this theme, images of both medical theatres figure together in the video footage, heightening the contrast between the two environments before including the place in which they are projected. The audio-track features the sounds caught when the filming took place – creaking doors and floorboards interspersed with vague extraneous sounds. A scenario containing a life drawing room draws the attention immediately to the question of the body – or lack of it.



WSA Harvard conference suite seminar room

Although based on the same audio-visual footage, the projections are different in each space. That used in the conference suite is intended to reflect the typical presentations delivered there: usually these would be for academic staff or post-graduate students. The space is the result of an architect designed project to *“fit out a[nother] room into a “Harvard” style seminar room Including two rows of tiered “horseshoe” format seating for 34 people, as well as improved mechanical ventilation, heating, lighting, acoustics, IT and the latest audio-visual equipment. The corridor is used for “meet and greet” and incorporates a beverage area and easy seating.”* (Studio Four Architects, 2014) The seminar room is no bigger than any teaching room even though extra

seating can be added behind the fixed horseshoe area.

The audio-visual equipment is identical to that in the big lecture theatres but the size of the space and the south facing window wall limit the flexibility of this equipment. The screen is difficult to see without closing the flimsy blinds that are regularly broken by people unable to locate the mechanism to move them. The seating is also difficult to maintain and many of the chairs are no longer adjustable. The point of this unflattering description is to emphasise the contrast between the intent and the interpretation of the project. Lecturers and researchers using this space have usually not had the opportunity to adapt their presentations accordingly and, although some presentations are intended to demonstrate skilled use of different applications, this is not usually the case.

The video I project in this space is intended to reflect some of this: it is structured to show the use of various simple video effects, and make academic references, particularly to Victor Burgin's use of textual intertitles in such video work as *Belledonne* (2016), which he screened in 2018 during a lecture at WSA (in the other lecture theatre used in this work) to complement the group exhibition in the John Hansard Gallery in Southampton. However, like the mismatch between the architects' description and the reality of the Harvard Suite, the use of effects is not refined and of good quality.

The key element that draws the historical theatres and this new space together is the curved and tiered seating, bringing the spectators' gaze into focus in the same central point. This is especially true of the Old Operating Theatre where a chalkboard on the fourth wall could be used in the same way as the screen in the Harvard Suite.





Harvard suite seminar room,

The second version of this work makes use of the final lecture theatre at Winchester School of Art. The one in which Burgin screened *Belledonne*, it is much smaller than the others, has comparatively steeply raked seating (like the theatres in the images) and is the only one to have natural light, which comes from windows along part of one side. It has a soft screen, uses Windows (the others use Macs) and is most often used for simple teaching presentations, such as PowerPoint, to undergraduate groups. With this in mind the projection on the screen consists mainly of still images moving steadily on without commentary but with the same audio track as in the other versions.

In all the works in this project the arrangement of any seating in the video footage is in some way reflected in the relevant lecture theatre. In *Still small voice* the main seating has been retracted and a few chairs follow the lines of the pews in the church and In *I don't have much news* the repeated view of the chair and settee arm and back, more prominent than the seated figures, is somehow reflected in the lecture theatre seating, repeated row after row. In *Body and soul* this is further enhanced by projections on the side walls of the space. These projections are the opportunity finally to reference the life drawing room.

Unable to collect footage in an authentic life drawing room I was permitted to film undergraduates in the painting studio making sketches for potential paintings including figures.



Left view



Right view

The effect of this is to make the already small theatre seem even smaller, even slightly round, and more intimate. Most importantly, it draws the eye straight to what they are drawing, straight to the projection on the screen, but the figure they are drawing is absent. Just like the empty marble slab in the anatomy theatre, the body isn't there.

This work is more intimate than either of the others. This is partly due to the focus being low and central, drawing the spectator into the scene. Even though the place in the video in *I don't have much news* is very small, the projection on a big screen in a big lecture theatre removes any intimacy and enhances the lack of communication which is already an important part of the piece. The spaces in this work, whether those in the video footage or the places in which these are installed, don't seem huge. Their ceilings are low and in the Harvard suite the curved seating, following the same curve as in the medical theatres, provides a sort of ring fence for the scene. In the other lecture theatre the projections on the walls have the same encircling effect.

This work brings together the central ideas of the project: all three installations reflect elements of all the areas discussed at the beginning with relation to affect but, where *Still small voice* most strongly considers place, power and sound and *I don't have much news* focusses on tightly framed home and relationships, *Body and soul* considers all of them more equally and in a more concentrated form.

Most importantly, this work focusses on the project aim by testing ideas that came together successfully in the other two works and by understanding the effect of applying them to a third installation. It is clear from all the writing in this chapter so far that finding a resolution to this work has been very difficult, and it is not totally resolved. The challenges have been mainly in trying to make the work fit tidily in the same context as the others. It was clear from early stages in *Still small voice* and *I don't have much news* that using those two lecture theatres as the sites of the installations

perfectly suited the subject matter and did result in the places being truly integrated and forming a third place with its own affect. Deciding to continue and conclude within the same boundaries created a similar dissatisfaction as when experimenting with trying to create a life drawing room – it felt false and lacked affect.

Where combining the places in the first works quickly felt sympathetic, in this work it has proved difficult to reach this symbiotic combination. I look at the potential for learning from this in the final chapter below.

Reflection and conclusion: back to the double squint

Colin Harper was wary of what he was about to experience when he put his hand on the latch of the church door. He brought with him a *“powerful, heavily weighted set of injunctions... triggered at one’s impending entrance to a church”* created by his personal life experiences and enhanced by his academic reading. He didn’t yet know the place he was about to enter but he had a view of what he expected to experience. As it turned out he was wrong about this particular squint and its purpose, but this discovery would not dispel his deeply embedded feelings on entering the church. Looking in, out, through and from a different place, the double squint in Stoke Charity parish church enables views that are otherwise not possible, creating a feeling of dislocation. The fundamental concept relies on this architectural feature creating two views impossible to see concurrently without it.

Through this image the metaphor of the double squint has been threaded through the thinking and the works in this project as different places have been viewed in a way that is impossible without an equivalent device.

This project has focussed on combining or superimposing views of two or more places that are familiar in some way but become a different, unfamiliar, third place through this superimposition. The sites/places that figure in this project share key features: their influence, whether positive or negative, on my life experiences and, therefore, on my expectations on being exposed to them, viz. Colin Harper’s wariness, their connotations re the locus of power, my experience and understanding of the concept of home or belonging, and their physical architecture.

All these elements contribute to the aim of the project: to gain new knowledge of how place-specific affect can be used as an element in audio-visual installations.

Reflection on different definitions and interpretations of what affect can be led to my understanding in this context that, in the interface between the elision of different spaces and what these represent, lies an intensity of feeling that is affect. It may be generated by expectations born of the spectator’s lived experiences, by the weight of history. These are elements located

with the spectator and with the actual places chosen for these pieces but brought into the work by choices mainly about the balance of scale between the different elements comprising the installation. Different thinkers locate affect along a continuum between subjective, a personal physical response to the environment, and objective, intrinsic to the elements of the environment itself. My choice of sites in two of the works in this project link both these theories: old churches and medical theatres bring with them the evidence of their age and I respond to both their materiality and my personal experience in relation to them. This is less evident in the location of the third work where what is external to the scene bears more directly upon its affect.

The definition of affect I carry through this project relates affect to places, so I have considered how place itself is defined by a range of writers and artists to understand why particular places are deemed to have intrinsic qualities that create particular affects or cause affective responses in visitors or viewers. My understanding of the terms place and space also affects my expectations and responses. In its simplest terms a place is a geographical reference point, but writers across all disciplines discuss place in terms of a *sense of place*, a shared sense of belonging, a history, a community, home. To heighten the contrast, Augé (1962, p. 63) talks about *non-places* like airports and shopping malls that people travel through without any kind of attachment. In one way or another all the places figuring in this project contribute to a shared history or experience, so are likely to trigger some response in the viewer or visitor.

Following the definition of place where it clearly has boundaries, whether physical or through the sharing of some bond, both the connotations from each site and the practicalities of the installations lead to discussions about frames and thresholds which become material, often literally as frames, in the audio-visual installations. These are discussed with reference to power as below, but also as practical choices made by artists, including architects and film-makers, to create particular affects: to bring these places together requires overlapping frames and movement between them over thresholds. The construction of these frames in each work is key to the questions raised about the locus of power, the relationship between the elements and the ensuing affect.

As a final practical element in developing an understanding of affect I have considered the role of sound (and silence) in artists' work, especially in the context of bringing contrasting elements

together in this project. This dimension eludes frames and boundaries and it is particularly the intrusion of unexpected sounds or the absence of those which would be expected that is crucial to the affect of two places made one. Exploration of the use of sound to create affect has always been the province of musicians and composers but, since the invention of audio recording, it has become a medium for artists and film-makers. In all three works in this project the sounds are those that are actually there during the video recording but they contribute to the dislocation felt by the superimposition of one place on the other.

Sounds expected to be heard in the church, lecture theatres and medical theatres immediately place the locus of power: it lies with the representative of the church, academia and science (although the cries of the patient undergoing surgery would represent the powerless!). Through writers and artists I seek an understanding of locus of power, the imbalance of relationships and how these influences influence affect.

Together institutions relating to church, academia and science have themselves for centuries represented wealth and the power imbalance between the rich and the poor. In all three scenarios the declared intention of those in power was for the physical or spiritual wellbeing of those whose lives they were manipulating: fear of God, the law and for their livelihoods ensured their docility (Foucault's *corps dociles*). Those receiving the word in the church or the lecture or anatomy theatre and those undergoing surgery in the operating theatre were expected to accept without question. Two works demonstrate this through the weight of history and the third asks what has changed when the government passed life restricting laws.

This imbalance is a direct focus of *Still small voice* and *Body and soul*. In the latter, I have also drawn on women's lack of power, particularly over their bodies, as the patients in the old operating theatre would all have been women as well as poor. In *I don't have much news* it is less overtly present but there is the questions of why the scene is so limited, who put this restriction in place and about the relationships within this microcosm.

The art in this project is the complete entity of the projection(s) in the relevant lecture theatre: the third, virtual place is the location of the work. Each element is specifically chosen for its part in

each work. The theatres are not interchangeable as each has a different configuration and scale, each has its own affect to interact with the affect of the places in the projections and create a third, different place with its own affect. The lecture theatres and the videoed places are not incongruous companions as they all represent elements of the discussions above (e.g. locus of power) but bring together contrasting histories and time scales, or, in the case of *I don't have much news*, contrasting scales within the scenario. Together their contrasting affects result in an intensity that extends the notions of affect and dislocation in these audio-visual installations.

The aim of this project was to gain new knowledge of how place-specific affect can be used as an element in audio-visual installations. I believe that the project has shown that using places that are not only visually interesting in their scale, architecture etc. but also have strong connotations with reference to their history, usage and the potential viewer's experiences, can be brought together to form a coalition that is affectively stronger than that of the separate parts. To make this happen there have to be similarities as well as strong contrasts between the elements so that the superimposition of one on the other is to some extent natural and unforced. Furthermore, both parts had to be authentic inasmuch as the audio-visual material was simple footage taken in the relevant place with its own soundtrack. This was clearly so in the first two works.

The third work reinforces the above: where attempts were made to simulate, for example, a life drawing room, the result lacked affect, lacked conviction. The connection with life drawing could only be made successfully when it was based on current art students working in their studio. It also became clear that just using a lecture theatre did not automatically create affect, it had to be a space that enabled the affect of the place in the video to be felt too. Hence the large theatre where the seats could be retracted was the right site of the first installation; the small space eventually used for *Body and soul* would not have enabled a successful final piece for *Still small voice*.

As the original intention for that piece had been its installation in the Council Chamber, the next stage would be to develop the project by looking outside the art school for suitable combinations of places. Furthering the photographic work of Nolle discussed earlier where she installed homeless shelters in opulent living rooms, this project could consider the affect produced when a greater range

of contrasting places are brought together in audio-video installations.

Through the three installations encompassed by this project I have questioned the location of art as a conceptual space. I have used my practice as the basis for reflection on ideas of site-specificity, temporality and affect in contemporary art – above all, affect - and I believe that the outcomes of the project extend these ideas and may prove of significant value to other artists and writers in the field.

Notes

- 1 Lecturer in Fine Art at Winchester School of Art
- 2 See later references to the panopticon and panoramas in chapter on power and relationships.
- 3 *HRM119: for a partnership society*, (2017) Zabludovicz Collection.
- 4 Elkins does not name the painting – none of the artist's work owned by the National Gallery is currently displayed as in Elkin's description.
- 5 Lippard (1998) p. 33 referring to Yi-fu Tuan (1977) *Space and place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- 6 See Knight, K. (2016) *Placeless places: resolving the paradox of Foucault's heterotopias* in *Textual Practice* 31.1. T and F online. p. 141-158
- 7 New York, Museum of Modern Art.
- 8 2022) *'Image and Space: Candida Höfer in Dialogue with the Photography Collection of the Kunstbibliothek' Museum of Photography, Berlin, March 25 to August 28*
- 9 *Dancing with the Unknown*. Nikolaj Kunsthal Feb- May 2018
- 10 Front cover image from Sartre, J.P. (1944) *Huis Clos*, Paris, Gallimard.
- 11 Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- 12 Quoted by Jones, A. (2007) *Memory and Material Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 13 loosely quoted by Schwartz and Bok (1990) p. 80 from Ruurs, R. (1987) *Saenredam: the art of perspective in Oculi, Studies in the arts of the low countries* number 1, Amsterdam and Philadelphia.
- 14 Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York Nov-Dec 2020
- 15 *La mise en équation par encadrement des différentes modalités de l'image (les tableaux suspendus au mur trouvant leur pendant dans les fenêtres, le miroir et la porte du fond), la présentation de ses états- limite de part et d'autre de l'espace scénique (depuis l'immense support matériel retourné jusqu'à l'apparition lumineuse et évanescence réfléchi au miroir), tous ces éléments se combinent à un scénario de production à la première personne pour faire de l'oeuvre une magistrale peinture à propos de la peinture*
- 16 Skopik, S. *Düsseldorf School*. Published online: 22 January 2014
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T2255304>
- 17 Wylie, D and Purbrick, L (2004) *The Maze*. London: Granta.
- 18 Screenshot taken 21.12.2021 from YouTube *Battleship Potemkin 1925: Runaway Baby Carriage During Odessa Steps Massacre Montage 29.02.2017*.
- 19 No exact page number in text.
- 20 (1913) The first volume of the seven novels that make up *A la recherche du temps perdu*.
- 21 (1990), *Magazine littéraire*. Issue 280, September. No page reference.
- 22 See e.g. Kahn, D. (1999) *John Cage: Silence and Silencing in Noise, water, meat: a history of sound in the arts* Cambridge Mass: MIT Press. Chapter 6 p. 161-199 and continuing through the book.
- 23 See reinstallation (2020) through DIA Arts Foundation on YouTube *New York out loud: Max Neuhaus "Times Square"* 11.02.2020.
- 24 *New Ontology of Music (PAIK)1963* reprinted in *Nam June Paik: Videan' Videology 1959-1973*, 1974 New York, Everson Museum of Art, exhibition catalogue unpaginated.
- 25 (2000) *Sonic Boom: The art of sound*. Hayward Gallery April- June 2000, accompanying book ed. Toop, D. London: Hayward Gallery Publishing.
- 26 *Christian Marclay*, White Cube Bermondsey, January – April 2015
- 27 Originally presented as the Tanner Lectures at Stamford University in October 1979 and the Howison Lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, in October 1980
- 28 E.g. (2002) *London Orbital*. London: Penguin. the account of a walk around the M25 and (2011) *City of disappearances* London: Penguin
- 29 *Out of Time: A Contemporary View*, August 2006 to April, 2007

- ³⁰ See, for example, Havard, T. (2021) *Insight: Domestic abuse and Covid-19: A year into the pandemic*. House of Commons Library 11 May
- ³¹ See, for example, Savage, M. (2020) *Why the pandemic is causing spikes in break-ups and divorces*. BBC Life Project, BBC Global News 7 December (accessed 23.11.2021)
- ³² See Wickham, A. (2018) *Strike a Pose: 250 years of life drawing at the RA*. RA Publications, to accompany *From Life* exhibition.
- ³³ Eschleman, C (1988) *Sulphur 22: Featuring: A Tribute to Ana Mendieta* quoted by Rosenthal, 2013 , p.11.
- ³⁴ Whittier, J. (1884) in Horder, G. *Congregational Hymns*, quoted by Bradley, I. (1997) *Abide with me: the world of Victorian hymns*. Chicago: GIA Publications. p.171.
- ³⁵ Hamon, E. and Gatouillat, F. (2016) *St. Etienne du Mont*. Paris: Picard.
- ³⁶ See, for example, Alpers, S. (1983) *The art of describing: Dutch art in the seventeenth century 1597- 1665*, London: John Murray, and Schwartz, G. and Marten, J. (1990) *Pieter Saenredam: the Painter and his Time*, London: Thames and Hudson
- ³⁷ *Trani, La "Light Music" di Brian Eno in mostra al Castello Svevo* on YouTube, posted 16 May 2017.
- ³⁸ Barry, R. *Inside the Operating Theater: Early Surgery as Spectacle* published December 9, 2015 in JSTOR Daily.
- ³⁹ A rare photograph showing just how crowded operating theatres were in 19th century London. Wikimedia Commons.
- ⁴⁰ *The star is the corpse*, History Today 29 June, 2016 (accessed 11.11.2021)
- ⁴¹ Catherine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, accessed 10.04.2022.
- ⁴² Lectures delivered at the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1790.
- ⁴³ I enquired about using the life drawing room at the Royal Academy but it was temporarily closed for refurbishment.

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