Siting Animation: The Affect of Place

Birgitta Hosea

With their book *Experimental Animation*, first published in 1976, Robert Russett and Cecile Starr collected examples of 'innovative animation' that exhibited 'personal daring' in order to provide others with 'a dynamic overview of this brilliant but little-known kinetic art form' (Russett and Starr 1988, 9). 'Perhaps one day', they mused,

> '…these films will be marketed through art galleries and "hung" in museums; perhaps they will be collected and played on home projectors and video machines, as long-play records are now heard on hi-fi sets; perhaps programmes of these films will be presented in theaters and television, as recitals and concerts now are viewed with pleasure by mass audiences.' (Russett and Starr 1988, 11)

Nowadays, experimental animation is no longer 'little-known'. Animation artists such as William Kentridge, Tabaimo and Nathalie Djurberg are exhibited in major international biennales, museums and art galleries. In our contemporary world of media proliferation, innovative animations go viral and are passed from user to user through mass

audiences on the internet. Screens are no longer only to be found in cinemas or living rooms - indeed our cities are filled with moving images. Animation artists are not restricted to the single, short film format and they are using moving images to create spatial experiences as an art form in galleries and other sites. Using examples from installations of animation made by artists including Rose Bond, Birgitta Hosea, Pedro Serrazina and Xue Yuwen, this chapter will consider how being shown in the form of an installation affects the viewing of animation. What are the implications for the spectator's experience if the work is installed in three-dimensional space as part of an art exhibition, museum display or visitor attraction rather than being seen from a fixed seating position?

Sites of Experimentation

Where does experimentation take place when techniques that were once considered the sole province of the avant-garde are now routinely adopted as the aesthetics of mainstream, commercial motion-graphics? As defined in Russett and Starr's book, in the practice of experimental animation (and this could also be applied to artists' film more generally) artists seek generative strategies other than conventional narrative or mere decoration to motivate them to create time-based media. These strategies could arise from formal concerns with technique, technical processes or subject matter. They could be an exploration of materiality – such as sand and paint on glass in the work of Caroline Leaf (Russett and Starr 1988, 15) or the glitches of silent film in Tezuka Osamu's *Broken Down Film* (1985). They could be an exploration of structuring processes - such as taxonomy in the work of Karen Aqua (Rostron 2016) or dream-like structures in Suzan Pitt's *Asparagus* (1979) or tropes of animation practice such as cycles, in Jonas Odell's *Revolver* (1993), or mathematical principles and Islamic geometry in Zarah Hussain's *Numina* (2016). What these works have in common is that they are created with the intention to investigate rather than to entertain or embellish.

Displaying experimental animation in a gallery does not, however, automatically confer the status of installation art upon the work. If simply screened in a gallery space, short films which have been designed for concentrated and intensive viewing in the dark do not necessarily investigate spatial relationships and site. They remain experimental short films. As Catherine Elwes has said, 'Many artists, perhaps too many artists,

simply turn galleries into cinemas, with perfect blackout and uncomfortable or sparse seating, and call the work an installation.' She goes on to quote Nicky Hamlyn as arguing that a work which absorbs the viewer into the 'illusionistic space of the film' and in which 'nothing causes the spectator to reflect on the relationship between the space of the film and that in which it is being … is not installation, it is cinema' (Elwes 2015, 4). For Hamlyn, it is problematic when time-based works are exhibited in galleries without investigation of their site or presentation as he describes in his review of exhibitions by Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon:

> 'The problems arise because the work has not been conceived at the outset to function effectively as installation, in this case because it is not installation: it is cinema. Insofar as the films are singular or short, and contained in solo shows, some of the awkwardnesses and distractions associated with time-based work in large, multi-roomed shows are inadvertently avoided. However, on a conceptual level there is a problematic mismatch between the films in themselves and their form of presentation.' (Hamlyn 2012, 265)

Through a consideration of works of time-based installation that specifically use animation rather than live-action footage, Edwin Carels builds this argument about the relationship between the work and its siting further. He comments that animation sited in the gallery can be 'derivative' in character and does not always live up to its potential for being staged in space, for questioning its relationship with the viewer or for the critical investigation of animation as concept rather than being merely adopted as a technical process.

> 'More than purely a filmic practice, animation thus needs to be understood as the staging of an agency: the manipulation and interpretation of intervals, not only between film frames, but also between images and objects in space. As with the earlier optical toys, the animated image can only occur thanks to physical action and physiological response, always mediated by the observer (Carels 2013, 293–4).'

In response to these observations by Elwes, Hamlyn and Carels, this chapter focuses on animation installations in which the artists' experimentation does not simply lie with materiality, aesthetics or form, but demonstrates a concern to investigate the space of viewing, the

relationship with an audience and the process of reception itself. The works that will be considered do not recreate a cinematic experience in the space of a gallery, but experiment with location through being shown in non-gallery spaces outside of a strictly institutional context. These works were designed for a specific spatial and conceptual context – public viewings in historic spaces that are re-animated by the work. Thus the works all formed part of unique experiences in which the animation would not make the same sense if shown in another space: the geographical location, physical experience and viewing context all contributed to the experience. Considering these examples of animation installation together provides an opportunity to reflect on a number of different spectatorial positions that are inhabited by the visitor as well as the notion of being sited. The implications of site as social, experiential, transcendental, subjective, material, spatial, and discursive will also be explored.

Communal sites

Since she is featured in the Revised Edition of Russett and Starr's book (Russett and Starr 1988, 19), the work of Rose Bond forms an effective bridge between experimentation with materiality in animated short films and her more recent work in which she experiments with how that animation is displayed and experienced.

Bond's early cameraless films, drawn directly onto 35mm film, include *Gaia's Dream* (1982) and *Macha's Curse* (1990) and are now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Her first multi channel animation, *Salish World* (1994), was created for the touring exhibition *Sacred Encounters*, which documented the different perspectives and encounters between the indigenous Salish people and Jesuit missionaries in western Montana. Bond's looped animations drew upon traditional Salish rock drawings and were displayed across three screens using laser discs. This exhibition made her aware of the active nature of viewing multiple images – the visitors couldn't take it all in at once, so would choose to stay and watch it all or move on (Bond 2015).

The success of *Sacred Encounters* led to another collaboration between curator, Jackie Peterson, and Bond for a series of illuminations of buildings in Old Town, Portland - a historic district undergoing redevelopment (Bond 2015). *Illumination #1*, first shown in 2002, featured a series of animations projected from inside the building onto the

windows of the historic Seamen's Bethel Building built in 1881. The animations light up a strip of windows of differing shapes across the two sides of the building that face the corner of the street. The effect is reminiscent of a cartoon strip spread across a number of panels. As if summoning ghosts from the past, the 12-minute animated loop draws upon 120 years of history of the people who once inhabited this site: sailors, labourers, merchants, Chinese, Japanese, Roma. The work had a big impact on the audience:

> 'Bond turned an Old Town building into a luminous work of art that literally glowed with dancing images…car traffic stopped, crowds assembled in the middle of the street, and rapt silence prevailed on the night it opened.' —*The Oregonian* (Bond 2012)

Bond has gone on to create a number of animated installations that are based on extensive research into local history. In these projects, animations are projected from the inside of buildings onto the windows of historic building as if they are haunted from within. These include the stories of a local synagogue and immigrant community in New York for the Museum at Eldridge Street in *Gates of Light* (2004 and 2007), a reflexive comment on the creative process in *Intra Muros* (Portland, 2007; Utrecht, 2008; Toronto, 2011), *Broadsided* (2010) – projections on the windows of Exeter Castle, the former site of Devon Crown Court, based on extensive research into injustice over the ages from the city archives of Exeter and her most recent animated installation, *CCBA* (2016), that explores the Chinese community of Portland with memories of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in the early to mid 20th century.

Representing collective memory, Bond's architectural projections are created as a communal experience for viewing by both invited audiences

and casual passers-by who happen to be in the vicinity. A group of strangers, interconnected through this location, gather together in close proximity to share the experience. For Bond it is important that these moving images are experienced in a social setting that is located in an urban public space and not on a screen or a phone. The spread of animated fragments assembled across multiple windows gives much more information than is possible to view in one screen and it is necessary to walk around to fully experience the work:

> it becomes interesting to consider differences between the fixed and relatively immobile space of the movie house and the freedom or imperative to move that is often associated with multi-channel projection. How do mobility and choice figure into perception of multiple moving-image screens? Be it an animated installation like *Illumination No. 1*, which wraps around the second storey windows of the Portland Seaman's Bethel Building or the multiple boxes on a Fox newscast – the viewer is challenged to move head and body. Yet, even with their best attempts, it is seemingly impossible to take it all in. (Bond 2011, 71)

Confronted with multiple images, Catherine Elwes, in her book *Installation and the Moving Image,* considers the mobile spectator of installation art to have a fragmented and superficial attention span compared to the concentrated and critical viewer of experimental short films from the counter- cultural era. She refers to a 'media-bombed' viewer 'raised in a screensaver culture of constantly refreshing images' who is 'browsing the work like a cultural *flaneur*' and whose 'spectatorial attention deficit' is a result of 'desensitisation' due to a proliferation of moving image works on screens in galleries, public and domestic spaces (Elwes 2015, 155–6). However, as Bond points out in her article 'Poetics and Public Space', information overload is not a new accusation for multi-screen work. Her article considers the multiplication of screens in our culture, from the multi-channel *Glimpses of the USA* by Ray and Charles Eames, through to contemporary advertising. (Bond 2011).[i]

Created for the Moscow World Fair in 1959, *Glimpses of the USA* consisted of seven 20 x 30 foot screens set inside a giant geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller. Within this spectacular setting, the Eames's used more than 2,200 still and moving images to present a typical day in the USA, albeit freed from pain, dirt, discomfort and inequality. Indeed, it has been described as 'an image of the good life - without ghettos, poverty, domestic violence or depression' (Colomina 2009, 42).

Based on the logic of a grid, the structure is like a newspaper or comic strip where the viewer can choose to flit between panels or to focus in on one in depth. According to Beatriz Colomina, the Eames's were 'architects of a new kind of space', one that 'breaks with the fixed perspectival view of the world' and 'where there is no privileged point of view' (Colomina 2009, 40). Their idea of maximising information through multiple simultaneous screenings was influenced by the circus, the mass of monitors in the war room and their own experiments in education and communication. Although one contemporary journalist described the experience as 'information overload' with images coming too fast to comprehend, for the Eames's this was an experiment in communication and they wanted the audience to make their own non-linear connections between the visual impressions in front of their eyes. (Colomina 2009, 43–9) .

Another such spectacle, *Expo 67*, was organised by the National Film Board of Canada and staged at the Montreal World Fair in 1967 to celebrate Canada's centenary. A forerunner of IMAX technology, *Labyrinthe* featured a chamber with one giant screen mounted on the wall and another on the floor. This room was connected by a maze of mirrored prisms to another chamber with five screens in a cruciform shape showing perfectly synchronised films that had been shot on a similarly shaped cruciform rig. The producers of *Labyrinthe* thought of the communal experience of multi-screen cinema as 'a new language capable of accessing the unconscious mind and releasing new kinds of associations deeply buried in the human psyche' (Marchessault 2008, 46).

Sites of Expanded Consciousness

Glimpses of the USA and *Labyrinthe* were both intended to create sites of expanded consciousness. This demonstrates that the communal viewing experience of a moving image installation need not engender a superficial and fragmented lack of critically engaged and focussed attention. Indeed, in his book *Expanded Cinema*, Gene Youngblood proposes a synaesthetic cinema that would move away from realism and utilise multiple sensory stimuli to leave space for the individual's own free associations and thus expand their consciousness. He argues for a paradigm shift in cinematic language to 'a process of becoming, man's [sic] on-going historical drive to manifest his consciousness outside of his mind, in front of his eyes': the 'synaesthetic mode' (Youngblood 1970, 41–2).

This aimed to liberate the viewer's mind from the dulling effects of mainstream narratives that are 'a relatively closed structure in which free association and conscious participation are restricted' (Youngblood 1970, 64).

In Xue Yuwen's installation, *Mountain Daily* (Itoshima, Japan, 2015), a private act of meditation is shared with an audience to become a public act that seeks to expand the consciousness of others. In her short films, such as *Last Words* (2015), Yuwen seeks to integrate her Buddhism with her work in animation. For her, drawing for animation is an extension of her meditation practice:

> 'For me, it is the experience. When I draw a line - at that moment I am the line itself. You are completely caught up with the time. You and what you draw is expanding together. The feeling is similar to when doing meditation.' (Yuwen 2017)

As in her films, this installation goes beyond a purely personal exploration in seeking to extend this experience to her audience.

The animation itself consists of four looped sections representing ordinary, everyday actions: face-washing, eating, combing hair and reading. The animation freezes and multiplies at some points to leave a trace of the movement and reflect its daily repetitiveness. Created in a Japanese village, the work was inspired by the lives of the villagers and the deep influence of Zen on each moment of

their daily life. When finished, the animation was projected at night directly onto the mountain, forest and ancient buildings for the villagers to see. Depending on the reactions of the audience, Yuwen moved the position of the projection to play on another part of the landscape approximately every 10-15 minutes. This combination of the repetition of simple daily activities and the projection into the villagers' everyday lived environment represents the state of living completely in every single moment of the present. The reaction of the audience was very positive. Some local elders expressed their wishes that more young people could come back to the village, to re-feel the traditional way of living, of using the body and senses to live instead of living in the brain. (Yuwen 2017)

Aside from connecting the audience through a communal, meditative experience that uses animation to portray a heightened sense of the everyday, another aspect of interest in this work is the significance of the local, lived environment as projection screen. Integrating humans and nature was intended to convey a Buddhist experience of transcending the limits of individual consciousness and awakening an awareness of the interconnectedness of all living beings. The site was an integral part of this work. Prior knowledge of the village and the landscape has an effect on how the work is perceived. *Mountain Daily* would not have had the same impact if screened in a cinema as part of an urban festival. It was a unique experience.

The importance of the actual location and its contribution to a work of animated installation is reinforced by Anne Rutherford in her analysis of one specific version of the installation *I Am Not Me, The Horse is Not Mine* by William Kentridge at the Sydney Biennale in 2008. In this installation, she points out how:

> '…the materiality of the projection surface drew the viewer into a semi-awareness of the space 'behind' the image, an experience of that materiality … the decay of the walls, as it erupted into the image, added a tangible historical resonance, one of obsolescence and degeneration, through the materiality of the surface itself… In a sense, the film performed the site, gave the site itself a performative resonance.' (Rutherford 2014, 87)

Rutherford contends that animated installations cannot be discussed through reference to the content alone, but also to the spatial and

sensory experience they engender. In an ephemeral work “the significance… only endures if they are written about in ways that can capture the corporeality and intensity of the material encounter they evoke." (Rutherford 2014, 92) Thus, in a discussion of any installation, there needs to be a consideration of the conditions in which the work was staged and located.

Sites for peeping

Moving on from works designed for public, collective viewing that aim to produce private acts of contemplation and meditation, the next section will consider installations created for spaces that encourage a purely private experience of furtive looking and force the viewer to physically position her body and her gaze into a very specific position in order to get a clear view of the work. This is another area in which Rose Bond has been pioneering. Her first film installation, *The Peep Show* (1990) at the Name Gallery in Chicago, was a satirical take on a porno booth and featured a three-minute Super-8 cycle of ‘a revolutionary view on female sexual arousal.’ The animation drew upon anatomical images from the ground-breaking text about women’s health, *A New View of a Woman’s Body: A Fully Illustrated Guide* by the Federation of Feminist Women’s Health Centers (1981). Thus, the viewer was invited to look into the interior of a device to examine the inside of female anatomy: ‘the cycled engorgement of an intricate maze of tissues and capillaries; an interior felt but never seen’. (Street 1996).

Although it has been shown in other contexts, Birgitta Hosea’s *Out There in the Dark,* was conceived of to be presented under specific conditions that challenge the voyeurism of the spectator. Hosea’s work is concerned with a conceptual investigation of animation. Rather than using animation to create short films, she is concerned with deconstructing and deterritorialising conventional ideas about animation. The live performance, *Out There in the Dark,* combines animation and live presence in a reflexive work that investigates multiple levels of female performance and the performance of femininity itself. The installation was most successfully presented in the form of a peepshow in spaces that related to the thematics of the work: a former box office for *Act Art 7*, London, 2009; a disused storage space that could be considered a closet, *Mix 23 Queer Experimental Film Festival*, New York, 2010 and a room used for developing film, *No-w-here Lab*, London, 2013. The sensual

experience of walking through these spaces, being in the context of a cinema box office or smelling the chemicals used to develop films all impacted on the viewing experience.

The physical set-up of a peep show instils certain expectations in advance. Moving forward to peep through a restricted viewpoint, the viewer anticipates that they will see something titillating, but, in the case of this work, is instead confronted by a vision frequently described as 'disturbing' – a nightmarish living sculpture in which the artist has become a hybrid being that is half human and half animation, at once animator and animated; creator and projection screen; self and other. The artist's head is hooded by a paper- bag, and her face is replaced with a projection of an animated doll which lip-syncs to a sampled version of a few lines of dialogue from the iconic film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). In the section of the film from which the dialogue has been taken, Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) reflects on the act of performing for the camera. Tragically, she thinks she is performing a new role for her former director, Cecil B. DeMille, but is actually performing for the cameras of assembled journalists and police who have come to arrest her because she has just killed her lover. This snippet of dialogue is cut into small fragments and repeated, in order to create a rhythmic soundtrack that examines the words in minute detail through repetition. So as to explore notions of spectatorship and voyeurism, a live video camera with a slight time lag projects a view of the scene onto the back wall, which draws attention to the mediation involved in the process of filming.

Out There in the Dark was designed to be a reflexive comment on the voyeurism involved in the viewing of film. It was partially inspired by Laura Mulvey's classic analysis of cinematic voyeurism and women on display, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey 1999) and the intention of the artist was to address the role of the female performer in the cinematic apparatus as well as the ideological construction of the viewer. For the viewer, the act of going up to a peep-hole and looking through it is furtive and personal. Although this is done in private, they can be seen by other visitors to the installation while they are doing it. Towards the end of the performance, the artist approaches the peephole, reaches for the audience with a grasping motion and, although apparently sightless, studies them through mimed binoculars. (Hosea 2012, 74–5) Caught in the act of peeping by others, challenged and confronted by the object of their gaze, this disturbs the apparatus of classic cinematic voyeurism that traditionally takes place from a

private, fixed seat in the dark with an object of contemplation that does not acknowledge being looking at.

Sites for moving around

Traditionally, animation has been watched from a seated position in a cinema or on a television or, more recently, on a computer screen. In these situations, the viewer is usually in a fixed position that they stay in for the duration and they do not physically move around the images on the screen before them. Vivian Sobchack argues that static metaphors dominate film theory – for example the experience of watching a film is compared to the picture frame, the window and the mirror – and that these metaphors present the viewing experience as stationary and passive (Sobchack 1992, 14). Catherine Elwes contends that viewers of an

installation default to this familiar viewing pattern: ‘Spectators tend to pause at the ideal viewing position, equivalent to one they would occupy in a cinema, watch a while and then move on’ (Elwes 2015, 155–6). This model of stationary spectatorship is related to the development of one fixed, central viewpoint in Western art.

Perspective is described by Erwin Panofsky as emerging from the Renaissance as a modern representational system that creates the impression of a continuous three-dimensional space as if 'a section cut from an infinite space' onto a flat surface (Panofsky 1999, 56). However, he argues that what we have learned to consider as realistic representation is a mathematical abstraction with one viewpoint at its centre that does not take into consideration ‘that we do not see through a singular fixed eye, but two constantly moving eyes’ (Panofsky 1999, 31). The implication of this is that the world is measurable and that a stable, monocular, human subject is at the centre of the viewpoint. Panofsky equates this system of representation with the human-centric philosophy of Descartes, humanism and the rise of the Capitalist system, thus marking the beginning of an era of ‘anthropocracy’ or views of the world in which the needs of human beings are given more priority than other living beings (Panofsky 1999, 72), an age that is also known as the ‘anthropocene’. Jean-Louis Baudry extends this discourse on perspective to the development of photographic technology in which perspectival structures position the viewer as the subject and origin of vision, who makes sense of visual information at the 'active centre and origin of meaning' (Baudry 1974, 49). Optical instruments such as the camera appear to be scientific, empirical and neutral, but Baudry questions whether this is actually the case and whether the end product of the cinematic experience is one in which its ideological effect is suppressed and remains unquestioned. In other words, the world presented to us in mainstream cinema appears 'normal' and 'natural' because of the manner in which it is presented that continues traditions of monocular perspective in simulating the appearance of a three-dimensional and continuous ‘real’ space, rather than being seen as the reflection of a particular political world view that reflects the dominant class who funded, created and distributed the film.

In his work, Sergei Eisenstein challenged passivity in the cinematic experience and devised a theory of montage that would activate his audience rather than seeking to entrance them into escapism. In his writings on montage and architecture he argues that in the cinema, the stationary spectator brings together in their mind a

series of audio-visual stimuli that may range across discontinuous time periods and spatial relations. However, in the pre-cinematic era it was through moving between 'carefully disposed phenomena' that sequences of images were absorbed (Eisenstein 1989, 1). He gives the example of the sequence of paintings of the Stations of the Cross, commonly displayed around the walls in Catholic Churches. Sergei Eisenstein considers this form of ecclesiastical sequential imagery as a form of montage in architecture. (Eisenstein 1989, p7–9) Split across multiple paintings it denies the one privileged viewpoint of monocular perspective. The sequence cannot be understood in its totality from one fixed viewing position. The viewer needs to walk around to look at it from different angles to make sense of it. Mobility is an integral part of the process of understanding and connecting the parts that form the sequence. In his essay, 'Walking in the City', philosopher Michel de Certeau develops Eisenstein's point about connecting multiple images to suggest that we make sense of the world by moving through it – not by staying still. He argues that a city is not the rational, ordered place intended by planners and architects. The city is a giant text in flux, storied by the interconnected activities of its masses, which are not passive, but practise the spaces in which they live. A city is a system in process that is enacted by its inhabitants rather than a fixed place. It is constantly changing and impossible to define. (de Certeau 1993).

Installation art challenges the convention of looking through one static viewpoint. Walking through a space is an important part of the experience of understanding an installation. When there are different routes possible through the work, it is by walking through three-dimensional space that the visitor makes sense of it. An example of this is demonstrated in the installation *Visitation* **(**2004) by Birgitta Hosea, which was situated in the medieval crypt below the more recent 19th Century St Pancras Parish Church building. Upon entering the underground chambers beneath the main building and going down the stone steps, the temperature drops and there is a musty, damp smell. In the first, dimly lit room, the curator handed out torches and the visitor is pointed towards dark, unfamiliar tunnels. Without a map or any directions and guided only by the dim glimmer of a projection barely glimpsed round the corner, or the haunting soundtrack echoing through the corridors, they explored the tunnels. Different screens were positioned throughout the tunnels and they were all synchronised to show the same film, *London Angel* (2004). These screens included full

projections onto the wall or piles of old TV sets that were malfunctioning, detuned or incorrectly colour calibrated in order to show different variations of the film. The film used a mixture of live action, animated collage and manipulated video to digitally image photographically impossible scenes of the psychogeography of London and its invisible supernatural forces.

This spatial and physical experience of visiting an installation brings the body of the viewer back into how they understand the work. Mary Ann Doane points out that

> these works demand that the three-dimensional space of reception is activated, that the spectator/viewer become unfixed, cognisant of that space. This is a return to three-dimensional space, not as a form of realism, but ...to re-engage the body of the viewer as measure (of scale, distance, and materiality). And in this sense, they generate a rethinking of the location of the image, and the location of location. (Doane 2009, 164–5)

The physical act of walking through these spaces formed an integral part of the viewer's experience. Indeed, it is through movement that we understand the world. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty maintains that our knowledge starts with the body and the information about the world that we receive through our senses. The senses do not work in isolation but together in a moving, living body to create information about the world 'out there'. The space that surrounds us is not 'some sort of ether in which all things float' (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 243). Because we can move around, we can see, hear or feel objects from different angles and, thus, we orient ourselves in the world:

> my body is the pivot of the world: I know that objects have several facets because I could make a tour of inspection of them, and in that sense I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body. (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 82)

Perception takes place from an orientated position, which connects (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 243) and anchors (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 280) the subject in the world. Since birth we have moved through three dimensions and experienced being at the origin of our own perspectival space (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 253–4). This is a fundamental experience that comes before thought. Our senses are also linked to our motor functions (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 209–10). In the case of an artwork, particularly one that is installed in a spatial setting, our reception of the

work is linked to our physical responses. We experience our body as a unified system with which we connect to the world outside ourselves (Hosea 2012, 99–100). Intuitive feelings and emotional responses that do not have a directly physiological cause are experienced in the body. Goosebumps, hairs standing on end, a knot in the stomach, an inexplicable feeling of chill or even panic… walking through a strange and unfamiliar place can have a visceral impact on the human subject.

The visceral, uncomfortable feeling of unease that Freud has called the uncanny, has at its basis a reminder of 'what was once familiar and then repressed' (Freud 2003, 153), a trigger for the various psychological complexes that Freud had identified in his theory of psychoanalysis. For Freud the uncanny occurs when there is something terrifying hidden behind something that seems ordinary and everyday. It unsettles us, because it questions what we complacently think we know or are familiar with. To return to the discussion of Hosea's work, walking through the unfamiliar tunnels of the Crypt as part of the Visitation installation was reminiscent of Freud's description of getting lost in the red light district of a large city in his essay on the uncanny: an experience is had of being in a strange place, turning a corner and then returning to the same image that you thought you'd left behind. In her discussion of Freud's 'uncanny' experience of getting lost, his feeling of having been there before, but not remembering when, Jane Rendell conceptualizes his notion of déjà vu while in the act of walking as 'the spatial structure of unconscious hiding or folded memory' (Rendell 2012, 155). This notion of the spatialisation of déjà vu was apparent in this installation as, whilst walking through the space, the experience for the visitor was of being lost, but coming across images or music that had been seen or heard earlier. Also, as the Crypt is an ancient, dark, dank series of brick tunnels housing family tombs and memorials in chambers, the space itself has a palpable presence, a spine-tingling aura lacking from brightly lit, commercial gallery spaces. An appropriate site for a project about the paranormal, the Crypt is a liminal space between the world of the living and the world of the dead; between the past and the present; between the light and the dark; between the seen and the unseen: a portal into the underworld. (Hosea 2004) Thus, the physicality and materiality of the location and the experience of getting lost in underground tunnels were important parts of the *Visitation* installation.

Sites of social relations

Our response to space can be emotional, but it is also contextualised by our previous experiences, memories and belief systems. As defined by Miwon Kwon, 'the site is not simply a geographical location or architectural setting but a network of social relations, a community' (Kwon 2004, 6). Space can reflect community or division; be inclusive or exclusive; be accepted or disputed. Above all, space is discursive. In her work on space, geographer Doreen Massey argues that space is not fixed, essential and eternal, but plural, relational, in a state of flux, always in the process of being produced, subject to the result of interrelationships (Massey 2005, 9). Massey contends that space is an open system, in which layers of co-existing stories coincide by chance (Massey 2005, 111). These notions can be further explored in Pedro Serrazina's installation *Echos d'un Passage* (2015).[ii]

Originally trained in architecture before he took up animation, Serrazina's work demonstrates a concern with space as both social product and form of understanding. His investigation of spatial possibilities occurs both within and without the frame:

> animation practice … has the potential to offer us alternative spaces – spaces that make us understand the narrative if there is one, spaces that make us dream of imaginary landscapes, spaces that question our perception (Serrazina 2016)

He argues for a subversive approach to spatial representation that challenges conventional modes of viewing the world and goes beyond the human-centred system of monocular perspective:

> animation should remember its roots and how it left behind its original frame, (of the comics, the theatre, the illusionism shows), to re-establish itself as an independent art form, ready to challenge our modes of perception, of spatial and even of social organisation. (Serrazina 2016)

His installation, *Echos d'un Passage,* was commissioned for *Dream City*, a public art project that was creatively directed by Selma and Sofiane Ouissi with curator Jan Goossens for the Biennale of Contemporary Art in Public Space in the city of Tunis. With a theme of art and the social bond, the organisers aimed to explore 'art as a cement of a new society, a vector of social and intercultural cohesion' and chose artists who would engage with the given population. *Dream City* was an experimental laboratory to re-imagine the relationships between artists and the city, to get away from art in institutional galleries

and to re-appropriate public space for artists and new kinds of audiences. The area chosen to locate the project was the ancient Medina at the centre of Tunis - an area that connects past and present. (Ouissi and Ouissi 2015a)

Building upon his previous experience of collaborating with young Tunisian artists through supervising animation workshops on the 'perception of democracy' run by the UN Development Program in Tunis, Serrazina created an installation to connect the centres of two remote cities. The work was sited in central Tunis in a historic building, the Caserne Sidi el Morjani, in a long room with screens at either end. The films playing on the two screens showed first person walks through the souks of the Medina and the neighbourhood of Alfama in Lisbon, which was originally built during the period when southern Iberia was ruled by the Muslim Emirate of Cordoba. Thus connections were made between ancient Muslim civilisations in Europe and contemporary North Africa. Animation was used to create a visual bridge between the two remote locations. One comment on the work was that the animation brought a sense of reverie: like a daydream that interrupts your thoughts while walking, an individual, personal space taken in between the actual geographical space. (Serrazina, 2017)

With a different city being shown at either end of the room, the effect was almost like being in a tunnel between two different countries. The audience could walk between one and the other or sit in the middle and swivel their head. The ensuing sense of confusing spatial and geographical dislocation recalls Freud's uncanny as previously noted in discussion of Hosea's *Visitation*. The similarities between the architecture, local identity and daily routines of the street markets in the two cities 'reveal a shared and universal approach to the usage of space that is replicated beyond borders and exists above cultural differences' (Ouissi and Ouissi 2015b). Some local visitors said that they had not realised how similar Lisbon looked to Tunis and they couldn't tell the difference. Others said the work allowed Tunisians to rediscover their own city through the eyes of a foreigner. Yet others said they felt overwhelmed by the connection with the outside world, as living in post-Arab Spring Tunisia they felt under siege: under siege by the fundamentalists in their own country and under siege by the rise of nationalism and Islamophobia in Europe and the USA. (Serrazina 2017) Indeed, there is real poignancy in creating a virtual portal between Lisbon and Tunis at a time when freedom of movement to Europe and the USA is being curtailed in a spirit of irrational panic about refugees and Islamicist terrorists.

The foregrounding of space as social and yet discursive and potentially contested in this installation can be considered as an example of relational aesthetics. Nicholas Bourriaud identifies a field of 'relational art' in which 'human relations' are 'site for the artwork'. No longer an object created as a commodity for sale as luxury goods, this kind of art has 'intersubjectivity' as its basis: the relationship between the viewer and the work and the 'collective elaboration of meaning'. (Bourriaud 2006, 160–5) At the heart of all this is a move away from modernist strategies of 'breaks and clashes' in order to 'make possible fairer social relations'. He argues that:

> 'the imaginary of our period is concerned with negotiations, links and co-existence. We no longer try to make progress due to conflicts and clashes, but by discovering new assemblages, possible relations between distinct units, and by building alliances between different partners.' (Bourriaud 2006, 166–7)

Bourriaud sees this as a response to a move from a manufacturing economy to service industries and also as a response to a desire for gathering in public, face-to-face away from the solitary isolation of the internet. In his terms, relational art involves actual presence, social interaction and immediacy. These factors can all be seen as explored in *Echos d'un Passage*.

Conclusion

In this chapter a number of animated installations have been presented that investigate not the medium of animation per se, but the site of reception and how the viewer themself animates the work. Reflecting on the experience of viewing animation as part of a site-specific installation demonstrates the importance of movement through the site of reception to the perception of the work, the affect of site and how places themselves can have a visceral impact. It has argued that a site-specific installation can re-narrate the space in which it is situated and that the site is re-storied and temporarily estranged from its original purpose. Just as the animation creates a new layer of narrative in the site, so the historic buildings, geographical locations and social networks that form the site permeate and haunt the animation in return: adding a sense of history erupting into the present, adding kinaesthetic and sensory experience.

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Notes

[i] Another important precursor of contemporary multi-screen work is Abel Gance's epic film *Napoleon* (1927) which culminates in a spectacular crescendo of images spread across three screens – at times to extend the space into a panorama, at others to create a horizontal montage of contrasting images (Cuff 2016).

[ii] This project was conceived of and directed by Pedro Serrazina. Other credits as follows:
Filmed by Eduardo Amaro Silveira with Bejaoui Med Habib
Soundscape by Rita Redshoes and Nuno Aroso.
Animated by Raquel Silveira, Márcia Maurício, Gonçalo Encarnação and Mariana Amaral
Edited by Carlos Soares
Produced by Isabel Gaspar/ Instituto Camoes, for L'Art Rue/Dream City (this footnote could be edited).