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**Virtual Moments: Social and Spatial Histories Re-imagined
in a Video Installation by Stan Douglas**

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of
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(Special Individualized Program)

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ABSTRACT

Virtual Moments: Social and Spatial Histories Re-imagined
in a Video Installation by Stan Douglas

Stefan Jovanovic

This study focuses on a single work within the oeuvre of the Canadian artist Stan Douglas, the two-channel video installation *Win, Place or Show* (1998). This piece is constructed as an infinitely-looping counterfactual narrative, set in a modernist social-housing unit in late-1960s Vancouver that was never in fact built. Two dockworkers inhabiting a cramped one-bedroom unit in this imaginary setting repeatedly argue, fight and reconcile, while our view of this action – filmed from twelve different camera angles – is randomized by a computer in real time as the story unfolds and repeats. My study will consider this work within a twofold problematic; firstly, the themes and strategies that form the work's conceptual basis will be examined and situated within an art-historical context, with respect to their correspondences within the whole of Douglas's body of work and the broader context of Vancouver-based photo-conceptual practices over the past several decades. Subsequently, the work will be analyzed within a range of theories respecting the concepts of space, time and their relation to the construction of narrative and visual culture, and by extension, to the production of everyday consciousness.

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Introduction

The film and video installations of Stan Douglas are challenging, multivalent works that investigate the complex and reciprocal relationship between local histories and sites, historically- and culturally-specific forms of representation, and the larger social formations and historical processes within which such forms of mediation are intrinsically configured. Often engaging with concrete historical moments, while at the same time appropriating and interrogating their concurrent literary and visual idioms, Douglas's narratives seek to situate the experiential textures, effects and ideologies particular to these transitory social and spatial histories in relation to the more fundamental shifts and transformations of modernity that continue to shape our present social reality.

The present study will focus on a single work within Douglas's oeuvre, the two-channel video installation *Win, Place or Show* (1998). This intricately layered piece explores the subject of the postwar transformation of civic space in North America through the re-envisioning of particular moment in the history of urban redevelopment of the artist's native Vancouver.

At the same time, Douglas connects this issue of modernist urbanism to questions of representation, using cinematic and televisual strategies and styles to suggest and critique the ways in which physical geography and social-historical process are bound up in ideologies and mechanisms of social control that are often rationalized and legitimated through the consciousness-shaping representations of narrative and visual media.

Win, Place or Show is constructed as a looping six-minute fictional narrative that depicts a peculiar counterfactual

scenario. Two male dockworkers inhabit a one-room apartment in a modernist high-rise dormitory building that was planned for the Vancouver neighbourhood of Strathcona in the 1950s, but in fact never built. The characters converse, antagonize each other, argue and erupt into a physical fight, eventually collapsing in exhaustion; the sequence loops seamlessly as they invariably resume their tense conversation after each bout of fisticuffs. The two juxtaposed large-scale projections depict the action from opposite sides of the set, while the cutting together of individual shots, filmed in several different takes and from twelve discrete camera angles, is randomized by a computer program in real time, thus producing a near-infinite set of montage variations while always maintaining basic narrative continuity [Fig. 1].

The expansive formal and thematic dimensions of *Win, Place or Show* leave the work open to multifarious and rich interpretive possibilities that cannot be fully grasped within a hermeneutic critical approach. Indeed, the work itself would appear to have been deliberately designed to defy and confound any such attempt at mastery, and as such, the analytic framework and subsequent reading of the piece developed herein, while it neither pretends to be exhaustive nor definitive, is oriented toward a consideration of this work's shifting text within the art-historical context of its production and the sociological context of its formal and discursive mechanisms. Thus my analysis of *Win, Place or Show* in the present study will be framed within a twofold problematic, or within two intersecting axes of investigation that more or less demarcate my field of inquiry with respect to this work. The first of these, which I develop

in Chapter 1, will examine the question of how this work might be situated in the context of Douglas's sustained engagement with local sites, social history and the cinematic and narrative strategies that recur throughout his body of work. At the same time, these concerns and strategies will be located within the somewhat broader art-historical and sociological context of Vancouver and its local arts milieu, investigating the range of formal and thematic correspondences that can be seen throughout the artistic production of Douglas and his precursors and contemporaries over the past three decades.

My second problematic, which comprises Chapter 2, is concerned with the formulation of a theoretical framework within which the roles of cinematic strategies and fictional narrative specific to *Win, Place or Show* might more effectively be analyzed. Drawing on the concepts formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin in his pathbreaking discussion of time and space patterns (or chronotopes) in literature, this line of inquiry will investigate the specific (and reciprocal) set of operations between the work's formal and narrative spatio-temporal configuration and the real space and time patterns associated with the broader social and historical field that constitutes the world of the interpreter. The aim here is not therefore to develop a hermeneutic analysis of the work's topological and semantic patterns, but rather to propose – through the synthesis of Bakhtin's spatial and temporal narrative categories into a range of contemporary concepts respecting the material nature of urban space and spatial practices – how these patterns are interwoven with a range of social, historical, sensory and psychic as-

sociations; I would posit that this is fundamental to the way in which meaning is produced in this work.

The twofold inquiry developed in the first two chapters will provide the framework for Chapter 3, which is devoted entirely to the central question of the present study, the interpretation of *Win, Place or Show*. Situating the work at the datum of these two lines of inquiry or contexts, its meanings and effects shall be assessed by recourse to the connections that are immanent within and/or transversal between the former. In particular, I will focus on the question of how the artist's intermedia practice of appropriating specific narrative and cinematic formal conventions, in producing discordant and paradoxical relationships among the work's many layers, questions and deconstructs these cultural forms – and by extension, the political and ideological implications that underpin the social and historical representations mediated through these channels. In thus examining the work, I will be addressing the relationship between its multiple historical reflections – as realized through the artist's use of counterfactual historical inquiry that is expressed in narrative form – and the role of the moving image; with regard to the latter, I employ the theory and terminology of cinema by way of considering aspects of the work which are associated with cinematic and/or televisual representation. Given the work's complexity of both form and logic, such a hybrid art-historical, sociological and theoretical vocabulary will, I would hope, provide a sufficiently flexible and fruitful approach to the interpretation of this complex and demanding work.

1. Themes and Concepts in the Work of Stan Douglas and the "Vancouver School": A Contextual Analysis

If some of the most compelling works in the field of contemporary art are marked by a rigour and complexity of content and of viewing experience that is at least equal in degree to the rigour and complexity of their formal structure, Stan Douglas's video installation *Win, Place or Show* may be exemplary in this regard. Reflecting the artist's sustained engagement with strategies, issues and discourses across a broad spectrum of cultural practice, the formal and thematic layers that are woven together in this piece succeed in creating a myriad of correspondences to not only the local histories its narrative re-envisions, but moreover to the universal and essential reconfigurations of historical thinking, modes of representation and the social and psychic texture of experience that have taken place within the ongoing process of modernity. As both a necessary and fruitful starting point of critical reflection on this work, this chapter will examine how the conception and realization of *Win, Place or Show*, consistent with the artist's practice of addressing the above set of concerns through the recurrent use of particular technical and narrative approaches, may be situated within Douglas's body of work as a whole, as well as within the context of contemporary art production in Vancouver, the city where the artist lives and works.

Recent writing on contemporary Canadian art has produced somewhat few detailed comparative discussions of the work of the so-called "Vancouver School" relative to the increasingly prolific number of monographs and articles on the individual

artists that have been commonly associated with this group.¹ This may in part be attributable to the inherent risks involved in the comparative study of a range of artists, many of international stature and with extensive and heterogeneous bodies of work, that the results may prove more reductive than insightful. As well, the codification of a "Vancouver School" style within critical discourses on contemporary art and the resultant marginalization of a diversity of other artistic interests and approaches from within this local milieu may be seen as problematic, if not antithetical to the concerns of many Vancouver-based artists.² Yet throughout the work of a number of these individuals can be seen a range of common strategies and issues with respect to art production, within which the work of Stan Douglas – in particular the piece that is the subject of the present study – may effectively be located. As such, this axis of my investigation will consider three closely interrelated themes and approaches within both Douglas's oeuvre and the Vancouver School context that are manifested in *Win, Place or Show*. The first of these is the preoccupation among many artists that have been active in Vancouver over the past three decades in creating work that considers aspects of local landscapes and urban space, a theme and aesthetic whose initial emergence has been understood as corresponding to a concerted reintegration of social commentary into avant-garde practices beginning around 1968. The urban landscape can be seen as an integral thematic

¹ Among the Vancouver-based artists most often associated with this school are Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, Stan Douglas, Rodney Graham, Ken Lum and Roy Arden.

² For a discussion of the Vancouver art milieu's portrayal in the Canadian media and the controversy arising from the predominance of conceptual and photographic work in media coverage of Vancouver art, see Judith Mastai, "Conceptual Bogeymen: Art & the Media in the City by the Sea," *C Magazine*, no. 49, (April-June 1996), 21-5.

concern that spans the recent history of Vancouver art from this seminal moment of transition in minimal and conceptual art practices in the late 1960s to the persistent occurrence of urban images and themes in the past two decades within art works that have addressed and revisited specific, concrete local sites and social histories. As such, this subject relates closely to the second issue to be considered herein, that of the continual engagement of artists in the Vancouver community with social history (particularly local histories) in the production of art works that have addressed themselves in various ways to the problem of the relationship between visual and narrative forms and social-historical representation; many of these works at the same time can be seen to operate as explicit social commentary. The third interrelated issue I would like to consider will be that of the particular ways in which the formal and discursive potentials of cinema – as a site where many aspects of the history of the twentieth century have been inscribed – and the appropriation of cinematic narrative have come to play an increasingly central role in the work of Douglas and many of his photo-conceptual contemporaries within their interrogations of urbanism, social history and social processes.

Like many of Douglas's works, *Win, Place or Show* has its conceptual basis both in a particular historical moment – a significant transitional period of urban development in Vancouver that began in the 1950s under the rubric of "urban renewal" – and in a specific site of unfolding of this process, the predominantly working-class neighbourhood of Strathcona (where the artist now lives) that was narrowly saved from the wrecking ball by widespread community opposition to a social-

housing project that had been proposed in the late 1950s. The work's narrative is devised as a re-imagined scenario in which the oppressive living conditions in one of these proposed housing units – had their construction in fact been realized – manifest themselves in the dehumanizing and circular routine undergone by the two characters that inhabit one of these spaces. Set in the late 1960s and filmed in the contemporary style of the short-lived CBC drama *The Clients* that was both set and shot in Vancouver around this time, *Win, Place or Show's* scenario foregrounds this specific moment within its multiple historical reflections, suggesting perhaps that it is at this juncture that the dominance of unrestrained metropolitan redevelopment, as well as novel modes of spatio-temporal representation in forms of visual culture such as television – both of whose residual effects continue to shape our present social reality – are consolidated.

If the late 1960s represents such a swift and unprecedented transformation in the urban character of Vancouver – with the late arrival of modernist concrete-and-steel buildings, as well as the advent of sprawling, generic suburban housing tracts and shopping malls – this moment is also witness to a burgeoning of avant-garde art practices and the formulation within the work of several local artists of a persistent exploration and critique of the contemporary urban environment whose influence is intrinsic to the art-historical context of *Win, Place or Show*. According to Scott Watson, the foundations for the recurring interrogation of urban sites and urban planning among Vancouver artists are established in a number of seminal works of the late 1960s and early 1970s by N.E. Thing Company, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and

others, in the form of a distinctly artless rendering of the urban semiotic that the author has termed the "defeatured landscape."³ Watson locates the origins of this particular aesthetic and theme as a reaction not only to the rapid alterations in Vancouver's urban landscape, but also to the philosophical detachment and immanent self-reflexivity of the contemporary minimal and conceptual art practices in Vancouver and elsewhere.

Several works created by Iain and Ingrid Baxter in their collaboration as the often-parodic N.E. Thing Co., such as the highly ironic *Ruins* (1968), a large-scale backlit cibachrome transparency depicting a newly-built tract of suburban houses, may be the earliest examples of this critical urban trope within the art being produced in Vancouver around this time.⁴

It was in a number of key works produced in the 1960s by American artists such as Ed Ruscha, Robert Smithson and Dan Graham – most notably the latter's *Homes for America* photo piece (1966)⁵ that both referenced and critiqued high minimalist strategies by its formal arrangement of photos of suburban houses – that then-emergent Vancouver artists Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace saw the possibility for a re-integration of social commentary into the production of conceptual art work. Turning to photography as a technique particularly appropriate to the indexical recording of both the semiotics of the urban environment and the artists' own experience within it, Wall, Wallace and several of their early contemporaries began to create multivalent works

³ Scott Watson, "Discovering the Defeatured Landscape," in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), 247-65.

⁴ Ibid., 254. Watson notes that the Baxters' use of a backlit cibachrome transparency predates by a decade Jeff Wall's adoption of this strategy. Another example of a seminal work by N.E. Thing in the context of local landscape and urban critique is *Portfolio of Piles* (1968), a series of photographs taken along Vancouver's north shore.

⁵ The text portion of this piece was published in *Arts* magazine, December 1966 – January 1967, 21-2.

whose artlessness, disposability and explicit social critique stood out in stark contrast to the sleek disinterestedness (as well as the commodity status) of the fabricated minimalist works of their predecessors.⁶ Critical in this regard is Jeff Wall's *Landscape Manual* (1969-70), which was constructed so as to resemble a cheap instructional manual, and which documents, through seemingly random black-and-white photographs and text, the banal and featureless environment of a Vancouver suburb as experienced from the vantage point of an automobile. In Watson's view, *Landscape Manual* and other early photo-conceptualist works on urban space produced in Vancouver during this period sought to generate a typology of the abstract qualities of an urban landscape in a process of rapid transition and expansion, creating a decentered and fragmentary view of it that contrasted markedly with the "official" images of the city, in the form of unified and/or aerial views furnishing a sense of rational and functional homogeneity, that would have been promulgated by the dominant order.⁷

A similar strategy of indexical recording of the urban environment can be seen in Ian Wallace's photographic works of the period, such as *Elevator Piece* (1970), which assembled a series of images taken of each floor of an office building as observed from the elevator in the process of its doors opening at each level. The images were shown in a carousel slide projector, a mode of presentation somewhat imitative of both the mechanics of the experience itself and the mechanical gaze of urban surveillance. A similar aesthetic can be seen in another of Wallace's works from 1970, *Pan Am Scan*, a sequence of photographs

⁶ Ibid., 254.

⁷ Ibid., 257.

that explores the generic spatial characteristics of another site of corporate architecture in London. In these works, as in Wall's *Landscape Manual*, the abstractions of the urban environment were regarded as analogous to the delocalized, mystificatory and alienating processes of capitalism; the images in all of these works composed a lexicon within which such processes could be catalogued and decoded.²

The programme of the "defeatured landscape" lasted but several years in its initial phase, according to Scott Watson, only to progressively reappear – though somewhat transformed – throughout the 1980s in the work of Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and several of the younger artists whom they had influenced, including Daniel Congdon, Árni Rúnar Haraldsson and Roy Arden.³ Also emergent in the Vancouver art milieu at this time was Stan Douglas, who likewise had been influenced by the work of Wall and Wallace, and had adopted photography as his principal technique for producing artwork. In one of his earliest exhibited pieces, entitled *Residence* (1982), Douglas created a continuously-dissolving slide presentation using photographic images of a west-end Vancouver residential high-rise, shot in isolation against a blue sky, with the word 'RESIDENCE' in block letters below the bottom frame of each image. Reviewing the exhibition *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983* in which *Residence* was featured, Scott Watson noted that the assembled images of monolithic residential buildings in this work produced a bleak contrast to the more 'official' Tourist Bureau images of Vancouver that often presented aerial views of the city and its

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 261-62.

skyline, designing it as a spectacle.¹⁰ Though such a reading of the work situates it more or less within the domain of the "defeatured landscape," any explicit adoption of these earlier strategies on Douglas's part would appear to be confined to this single early work within his oeuvre. Although the work's formal and technical correspondences to its photo-conceptualist precursors – in particular Wallace's *Elevator Piece* – may perhaps have been only superficial, this work provides an early indication of Douglas's likeminded concern with the subject of local landscapes and urban space, as well as with the production of socially-critical (and sometimes paradoxical) counter-images.

As such, the thematic concerns reflected in *Residence* can be seen to prefigure a number of Douglas's later works; these include the investigation of Vancouver's redevelopment in *Win, Place or Show* and the corresponding *Strathcona Series* of photographs (1998), the civic disintegration of inner-city Detroit explored in *Detroit Photos* [Fig. 2] and the video installation *Le Detroit* (1999), and the conversion of municipally-allocated garden plots to new urban development in Potsdam in the film loop *Der Sandmann* and its accompanying series of photographs (1994-95). In each of these recent projects, the exploration of an urban site or landscape provides the conceptual basis for a visual and socio-historical investigation into a specific region and the production of an historical counter-narrative that draws upon its particular social history and local idioms. For Douglas, as for his photo-conceptualist precursors Wall and Wallace, social process and physical geography are bound up in an entropic flow that is configured and reconfigured by

¹⁰ Scott Watson, "Painting the Streets," *Vanguard* 12, no. 8 (October 1983), 53.

various (and often delocalized) ideological and political determinants. Thus in highlighting certain key historical moments and spatial histories, Douglas's works seek to unravel and re-deploy their inherent figurative and narrative strategies in order that one may reconsider how the multiple forces within this precedent sociological matrix have shaped our present social reality.

If the initial emergence of the "defeatured landscape" at the end of the 1960s marks the reintegration of social commentary into contemporary Vancouver art, locating the precise foundations for this preoccupation with social history and the approaches to historical representation that have informed the work of Douglas and his contemporaries since the late 1970s is a somewhat thornier issue. The past several decades have seen fundamental and far-reaching transformations in the field of historical interpretation and theory, within which the very nature of historical representation and its relationship to visual and narrative discourses have come under radical revision. Not only have these developments essentially undermined the ontological and epistemic status of traditional historiography and historical narratives; moreover, the examination of visual and narrative cultural practices throughout history could no longer viably progress along the immanent programmes of formal and stylistic interpretation that had theretofore provided the modern methodological framework for many academic disciplines such as art history and philology. With the incorporation into these disciplines of a broad range of new ideas and language from the domains of critical theory and the human sciences, the horizons of cultural analysis were expanded into a more complicated

enterprise whereby the historical, sociological and semiotic intricacies of various cultural forms, artefacts and discourses could be mapped out and re-evaluated by recourse to a wider spectrum of transversal connections between them. In the field of art history, the pioneering reinterpretations of much of the subject matter of French modern-life painting in the work of T.J. Clark and several others that situated these works within a vast visual and social anthropology of nineteenth-century Paris is paradigmatic of the new historical awareness that developed out of the theoretical and methodological shifts toward social-historical inquiry within the humanities and social sciences.

It is precisely this context in which Thomas Crow has situated the emergence of a parallel tendency toward social-historical inquiry within contemporary art practice, of which the photographic tableaux of Jeff Wall provide a seminal example.¹¹ In Crow's consideration of the series of large-scale, backlit photographic transparencies that Wall began to produce in the late 1970s (following a lengthy pause in his creative activity during which the artist pursued a postgraduate degree in art history), these works – many of which are constructed by clear and overt reference to monumental paintings of the art-historical canon – are conceived as an inquiry into and a commentary on the very "process by which art history as a changing field of knowledge becomes available to the artist in the first place."¹² Thus, Wall's approach to his subject matter in these elaborately composed tableaux, as in *Destroyed Room* [Fig. 3] and *Picture for*

¹¹ Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), Chapter 9, "Profane Illuminations: The Social History of Jeff Wall," 151-69. Originally published as "Profane Illuminations: Social History and the Art of Jeff Wall." *Artforum* 31, no. 6 (February 1993), 62-69.

¹² *Ibid.*, 153.

Women (both from 1979), did not merely quote the masterworks of Delacroix and Manet respectively, but engaged directly with the social-historical remapping of modernity and its iconographical codes by which social art historians were rewriting earlier interpretative accounts of these paintings. For instance, one cannot consider *Picture for Women* without deferring to the re-reading of its prototype, Manet's *Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, in terms of structured sexual positioning, that has been put forth by social art historians.

Thus, if the reappearance of the subject of urbanism and landscape in Wall's art production of the 1980s – though eschewing the artlessness and disposability that characterized his early work in the idiom of the "defeatured landscape" in favour of technical mastery and large-scale presentation – is viewed by Scott Watson as something of a re-emergence of this earlier programme, Crow's analysis situates this renewed interest in urban themes and subjects within a novel and sophisticated social-historical approach to the physical and social geography of Vancouver. This approach is formulated by recourse to the methods by which social art history was decoding the peculiar and complex iconography employed by the Parisian avant-garde in the late nineteenth century. In works such as *Bad Goods* (1983) and *Diatribes* (1985), the subtle incongruence of the carefully posed actors within these ostensibly naturalistic panoramas produce an odd and exaggerated sense of the abstractions of the urban environment, which at the same time their compositions create a strong thematic parallel between the contemporary Vancouver landscape and the sociological and spatial transformations of nineteenth-century modernity. As Crow has remarked, likening the

image of *Diatribes* to Vincent Van Gogh's *Outskirts of Paris* (1886-88) that has been a subject of analysis for T.J. Clark (though previously little-known), it is no mere coincidence that Wall "discovered the importance of the suburban *terrain vague* as a diagnostic feature of modernity at more or less the same moment that it was called to the attention of academic art history in T.J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life*."¹³

The development of a social-historical approach within the 1980s work of Jeff Wall and others can thus be seen to represent a significant moment in the evolution of contemporary Vancouver art – what may be regarded as an "historical turn" in the urban and social critiques that had informed the production of photo-conceptual work throughout the 1970s. Though manifested in a range of formal and technical approaches, and marked by diversity of specific influences and themes, this engagement with social history as a conceptual basis for art production may be regarded as an integral feature of much of the work that has emerged from this artistic community in the past two decades. Within the oeuvre of Stan Douglas, the recurring set of particular formal and theoretical approaches and concerns that have developed within such an historical engagement have given form to intricate and multivalent works that often involve the reconsideration of a single site or moment that embodies a transitory history, changing physical geography and obsolete technology of production or representation, wherein the multiple and complex intersections between these processes can be unpacked and their connections to the concrete material conditions of both the historical moment and our present reality reassessed.

¹³ Ibid., 162.

As such, Douglas's artistic output as a whole since the early 1980s can be read as a persistent interrogation of and commentary on the residual social and psychic effects of the historical and sociological shifts and transformations that have constituted modernity. This initial formulation of this programme and strategy can be located in *Onomatopoeia*, an installation work from 1985-86, in which Douglas assembled a set of dissolving black-and-white slides that were projected onto a large screen positioned above a player piano. The slide images depicted the interior of a textile mill, its weaving looms and the punch cards that were used to control the different patterns of weave, while the player piano (itself triggered by punch rolls of the same technological order) performed at regular intervals a number of bars from Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.111 (No. 32) that by a strange anachronistic coincidence sounded like ragtime. The significant historical phase referred to in this work is that which witnessed the twilight of romantic conceptions of artistic genius and the singular, subjective experiences of bourgeois high culture, simultaneously with the rise of the technologies of mass production and mass culture (including musical recording and cinema). The work of course makes implicit reference to the critical views of Theodor Adorno, who in his essay "Fetish Character in Music and Regression of Listening" disparaged both jazz and the mechanical reproduction of music as components of the commodity fetishism that was profoundly altering the traditional terms of the musical listening experience.¹⁴ However, as Peter Culley has noted, in highlighting and exaggerating this accidental and ironic correspondence between the canonical work

¹⁴ Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," 26-52.

of Beethoven and ragtime, *Onomatopoeia* "points to notion of experiential plurality that call into question the ideal of an autonomous western High Culture."¹⁵

This conceptual strategy of drawing out logical inconsistencies in the political and ideological forces and the transitory and arcane social and technological mechanisms at play within particular "key" historical moments in the process of modernity is perhaps the most consistent feature throughout Douglas's body of work, forming the basis for every one of his major installation pieces from the mid-1980s to the present. In *Overture*, a 16-mm film and audio multimedia work from 1986, Douglas used archival footage taken by the Edison Co. in 1901 from a camera mounted on the front of a train traveling through a remote mountain pass in British Columbia. The footage was looped and the sequences of complete darkness where the train was passing through tunnels extended with the use of black film leader; the audio component consisted of a male voice-over reading aloud a repeating section of prose adapted from Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* on the subject of waking and sleeping. As in *Onomatopoeia*, the multiple formal and structural correspondences within this piece – for example, the oneiric quality of both the prose fragments that are read aloud and the flickering, faded silent film footage – metaphorically suggest the multiplicity of interconnected social forces within which ever-changing technologies and forms of representation mediate both consciousness and experience. The historical moment that the decline of the novel as the exemplary cultural form of the nineteenth century shares with the invention of cinematic

¹⁵ Peter Culley, "Dream as Dialectic: Two Works by Stan Douglas," *Vanguard* (September-October 1987), 13.

technology and the novel regimes of perception and visibility it brought about is thus presented as the key point at which the spatial and temporal discontinuities of modern experience overtake the sensory coherence of premodern perception. In a more recent installation, 1994's *Evening* (produced at the University of Chicago at the invitation of the Renaissance Society), Douglas again engages with the subject of media history and its changing idioms of representation, exploring the 'key' transitional phase in the style of American news broadcasting from that of soberly-delivered information to the "happy talk" model of witty banter and human-interest stories. Simultaneously presenting three re-imagined newscasts from January 1st, 1969 and the same date one year later that were produced using actual archival footage of events that occurred on these two days, Douglas stages precisely this stylistic transition, with actors portraying news anchors [Fig. 4]. Clearly addressing television's considerable role in reflecting and mediating the larger social reality, *Evening* identifies the origins of our present culture of "infotainment" at the same historical moment that television's initial utopian potential as a critical medium sees its final demise.¹⁶

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, social-historical themes and concerns could be found in much of the work of Douglas's photo-conceptualist colleagues, and in several works a conceptual strategy with respect to the issue of historical representation strikingly similar to Douglas's own. For instance, Roy Arden in his ironically titled work *The New Objectivity* (1986) has

¹⁶ For an excellent survey and description of Douglas's body of work to 1998, see Scott Watson, "Against the Habitual," in Scott Watson, Diana Thater and Carol J. Clover, *Stan Douglas*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 32-67.

addressed the specific historical moment in the 1930s in which the aggressive social and political radicalism of early modernist cultural production (as exemplified by the *Neue Sachlichkeit*) shifted toward a programme of immanent formalist innovation; in this piece, installed at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1987 (Douglas's *Overture* was featured in the same exhibition), the artist arranged two Marcel Breuer chairs in front of two enlarged archival photographs of the gallery occupied by protesters in 1938. Through such a juxtaposition, Arden created a dialectical commentary between the representation of the historical avant-gardes and the contemporary status of these Bauhaus chairs as commodity items; moreover, in appropriating and altering the context of the constituent components of his piece, Arden makes reference to the selective (ideologically- and politically-determined) process by which events are inscribed into "history", and as such calls into question the very status of historical representation as "objective" knowledge.¹⁷

Both Arden's and Douglas's works of the period may simultaneously be situated within the threefold nexus of expressive and technical strategies that Michael Lawlor has put forth as marking the programme of conceptual photography in Vancouver in the 1980s: tableau, assembly and appropriation.¹⁸ In his review of an exhibition at Vancouver's Or Gallery in 1986 (Jeff Wall's *Diatribes* and the preparatory sketches for this piece, as well as photographs by Stan Douglas corresponding to

¹⁷ See the essay by Helga Pakasaar and Keith Wallace in the exhibition catalogue *Broken Muse: Vancouver Art Gallery, November 28, 1986 to January 18, 1987*. (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1986), 4-7.

¹⁸ Michael Lawlor, "Camera Works," *Parachute* (June-August 1987), 44-45. Review of the exhibition *Camera Works*, curated by Ellen Ramsey, Or Gallery, Vancouver B.C., December 3 to 20, 1986.

his installation *Onomatopoeia* were among the works featured),

Lawlor defined these strategies as follows:

Tableau is the careful set-up of scene to be photographed and its use requests that the image be interpreted [as] a *mise-en-scène*, a photograph made, not found. Assembly, of some apparatus or an installation, demands an active reception of viewers by involving them in the relations of their looking, through placement or physical interaction with the work. Appropriation is a re-presentation of an image which has been previously shown to the public, often in printed or electronic media. Styles can also be appropriated to create new work. The use of this device accesses the fact that context has a determining influence on what meanings are assigned to the image, and the re-presentation includes contemporary significations as well as revealing aspects of the historical situation in which the image was first used.¹⁹

Lawlor astutely notes that the defining features of Vancouver photo-conceptualism did not operate merely within the formal and indexical possibilities inherent to the photographic medium, but were often devices exterior to the image itself by which the very status of the photograph as "neutral" and "objective" means of historical representation and the ideological implications of such a perception could be interrogated and destabilized. Each of these interrelated strategies can be seen to recur as fundamental concepts within the work of Douglas and his contemporaries throughout the past two decades. Jeff Wall's cibachrome lightboxes, for example, employ a large-scale mode of presentation that calls attention to the very constructedness of these images, while simultaneously appropriating previously existing art-historical images and styles into these meticulous setups, thus foregrounding the double social-historical reflection within which these works are conceived. Douglas has also repeatedly made use of appropriation, of not only visual

¹⁹ Ibid., 44.

images and styles, but also of texts and of music; in addition to the reading of Proust in *Overture*, the artist has used quotations from E.T.A. Hoffman in his film-loop narrative *Der Sandmann* (1995) and from Poe, Swift, Sade and Cervantes in his video installation *Nu•tka•* (1996). Douglas's incorporation of musical works has included, besides the Beethoven piano sonata in *Onomatopoeia*, the use of Albert Ayler's free jazz composition *Spirits Rejoice* in his video installation *Hors-champs* (1992) and of Schoenberg's atonal film score *Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* in his silent film narrative *Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin, B.C.* (1993).²⁰ As part of these elaborate multimedia assemblies, the appropriated music and/or texts function as richly suggestive elements through which the particular historical moment Douglas is addressing can be re-imagined. Similarly, the construction of historical fictions and other scenarios that involve the appropriation of specific "styles" – local idioms and historical vernaculars – evoking simultaneity of recognition and estrangement, as in the late-1960s news broadcasting style that is refabricated in *Evening*, the silent black-and-white film in *Ruskin B.C.* or the parodic quasi-advertising pastiche of *Television Spots* (1987-88) and *Monodramas* (1991), suggests to the viewer a multiplicity of ways in which the situation re-presented may be responded to and continually reinterpreted.

It is as an intrinsic development within the social-historical programme of conceptual photography in Vancouver as it has evolved since the late 1970s, marked by the recurring and

²⁰ The best discussion of Douglas's incorporation of music into his body of practice is in Peter Culley, "Ascension: Music as Emblem and Agency in the Work of Stan Douglas," in *Stan Douglas*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1994), 102-15.

interrelated technical and expressive schemes noted above, that I would suggest the increasingly central role of cinematic strategies within the work of this artistic milieu might fruitfully be considered. If the cinema – as an exemplary cultural form of the twentieth century and one of the key sites where history is mediated – is of a piece with the modern social and sensory upheavals that have concerned the artists of the Vancouver School, like photography it is also a representational medium that may be appropriated, manipulated and interrogated in the interest of re-presenting and deconstructing both the histories it has propagated and the mechanisms by which it mediates them. That the cinema may well be the most pervasive means by which "history" is furnished to contemporary audiences is but one symptom of the multivalent qualitative transformations in time, space and subjectivity that, as Anne Friedberg has argued, have taken place within late capitalism partly as a function of the cinematic apparatus's twofold capacity for mediating both perception and spatial-temporal travel through representation.²² In Friedberg's view, the postmodern disappearance of history as a real referent and its reconstitution by cinematic images is inextricable from cinema's contemporary modes of reception (including television and the VCR) that allows films to be reseen outside their historical context.²³ As such, it may be suggested that the recurring cinematic strategies seen increasingly in the work of Vancouver artists since the mid-1980s – the use of large-scale video and film projections, the appropriation and refabrication of prior cinematic texts and styles, the production of installations in the form of loops

²² Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 2-3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

and/or as fragmentary, multi-channel quasi-narrative tableaux, etc. – are a means particularly appropriate to the renegotiation of the various historical subjects and meanings that are invoked by these cinematic narratives.

A range of such cinematic strategies can be found in Douglas's oeuvre; in addition to the use of found archival footage in *Overture*, the artist has staged fictitious scenarios in a number of works. The installation *Hors-champs* (1992) recreates, in period style, a late-1960s French television broadcast featuring a free jazz quartet performing an Albert Ayler composition. Douglas created two versions of the image: one with conventional editing that frames each of the soloists successively, the other consisting of a series of "outtakes" that shows the more subtle interactions between the other musicians that would have been edited out as "dead moments" in the broadcast. These versions were projected recto-verso onto opposite sides of a large screen suspended in the center of the gallery space, such that the two images played concurrently with the soundtrack, but could not be viewed at the same time. The piece is a simultaneous reflection upon both the utopian political aspirations of the late-1960s moment in Paris – of which the free jazz being performed by American expatriates in France at this time is evocative – and the selective process by which history is documented in its "official" version. In *Der Sandmann*, a 16mm film installation produced at the former Ufa studio in Berlin in 1995, Douglas created a fictional narrative conceived around the German civic garden plots, or *Schrebergärten*, which were established in the nineteenth century and had remained common to the urban periphery of cities in the

German Democratic Republic, only to have increasingly been sold and converted to new building sites in the wake of German reunification. In *Der Sandmann*, this latter historical process is restaged by means of a split-screen film that simultaneously depicts a Potsdam garden in the 1970s and the same garden today in the process of redevelopment; in an adaptation of the E.T.A. Hoffman story of the same name, an exchange of letters read aloud in voice-over recounts three characters' memories of a mysterious old man in the garden they had collectively imagined as the frightening Sandman figure of children's lore. In the film studio, Douglas constructed the garden set in a 1970s version and again in a contemporary version, both times depicting the same man toiling in the garden; one of the voice-over characters is also seen reading his lines off set. With each 'take', the set and studio were filmed in a continuous 360-degree panning motion with one vertical half of the image alternately blocked out, producing two separate loops that are then projected on the same screen, but out of phase by one-half rotation. In the resulting full-screen image, at all times split vertically in the middle, the panning motion suggests a continuous spatial and temporal wiping away of the older garden by the newer and vice-versa [Fig. 5].²³

The use of cinematic strategies within art works whose multifaceted reflections on social and/or spatial history also engage with the history of cinema, its corpus of texts, and sociological aspects of cinematic production and reception can be seen in a number of other works that have emerged from the Vancouver arts milieu. Mark Lewis's *Two Impossible Films* (1995),

²³ For a discussion of this work focusing specifically on its cinematic aspects, see the essay by Carol J. Clover, "Der Sandmann" in Scott Watson, Diana Thater and Carol J. Clover, *Stan Douglas*, 69-77.

produced during the several years the artist was living and working in Vancouver, manufactured in seamless fabrication of Hollywood style the title and end credit sequences for two proposed films in the history of cinema that never came to fruition: MGM's suggestion to Sigmund Freud that he write a screenplay (*The Story of Psychoanalysis*) [Fig. 6] and Sergei Eisenstein's idea for a film version of Karl Marx's six-volume magnum opus of economic theory (*Kapital*). Substituting recognizable locations in Vancouver for sites in Vienna and Moscow (in obvious parody of Hollywood's frequent use of the former city as a "double" for many mid-sized American metropolises), *Two Impossible Films* addresses the dubious reconstitution of historical moments that is mediated through popular cinema, as well as the impossibility for the cinematic medium – as a relatively narrow and rigid set of technical and expressive conventions – to access or communicate in any neutral or unstylized way a historical 'real'. The work of Rodney Graham (who in his frequent appropriation of music and use of literary references calls for a more detailed comparison with Stan Douglas than can be achieved within the scope of the present discussion) has since the mid-1980s also incorporated cinematic strategies as a central element, likewise radically deconstructing and subverting both the formal conventions of the medium and many of the visual and narrative tropes that have recurred throughout the history of cinematic representation. *How I Became a Ramblin' Man* (1999) is a nine-minute loop that features the artist in a rugged and pastoral setting on horseback in a parodic imitation of the classical Hollywood western or the Marlboro cigarette

advertisement [Fig. 7]. The cowboy figure rides in from the distance, dismounts, performs a country-western ballad on his guitar, embarks again and rides back off into the horizon, at which point the cycle repeats itself and he begins his journey back toward the viewer. Both the mythic themes within the American historical imaginary – the freedom and rugged individualism of settlers and cowboys in the Old West and the infinite expansibility of the American frontier – and the various cinematic and narrative motifs that have manufactured them are thus undermined by Graham's film loop; the "ramblin' man", as a slick Hollywood contrivance, is forever confined to the Sisyphean cycle of this manufactured scenic tableau.

In discussing the work of Stan Douglas and his Vancouver-based contemporaries in this chapter, my aim has been to put forward a sense of sociological and art-historical perspective with respect to the themes and strategies in Douglas's *Win, Place or Show* that might allow this work to be more effectively read in the chapters to follow. The attempt made herein is a provisional one, subject to the principle that the question of context is always incomplete and open-ended. All of the works I have discussed in this chapter are of course amenable to a multiplicity of simultaneous interpretations within divers contextual frameworks, of which the formal and thematic correspondences that are revealed among them as works that have emerged within the same artistic milieu is but one set of aspects. Just as the very structure of *Win, Place or Show* shifts the terms of its pro-filmic spatial and temporal configuration with each repetition, the preceding forms but one axis in an

array of interpretive possibilities that may continually be expanded, but never foreclosed.

2. Space, Time and Narrative: A Theoretical Synthesis

In the preceding chapter I have considered some of the interrelated formal and discursive approaches and themes that are common to a range of works within the art practices of Stan Douglas and his Vancouver-based precursors and contemporaries, in the interest of formulating a preliminary contextual framework within which *Win, Place or Show* may more effectively be situated and analyzed. I have proposed that from an art-historical perspective, the foundations for this work's formal and conceptual bases may be located within the historical development of the photo-conceptual school of Vancouver art, as I have provisionally defined the latter with respect to the recurring and intersecting strategies and subjects of urban critique, social-historical inquiry and cinematic representation, as realized through such formal and representational devices as the fictive tableau, the appropriation of existing texts and styles, and the presentation of work in the form of mixed-media assemblages or installations.

Having thus mapped out the first line of my twofold inquiry into *Win, Place or Show*, in this chapter I will focus on the formulation of the second axis of investigation within which this piece will be considered, and in so doing, will expand somewhat the disciplinary scope of my analysis. The central concern motivating the present discussion is the question of how this work functions as a site where the cinematic and narrative strategies I have outlined in the previous chapter, and normative modes of formal and narrative interpretation meet and are mutually configured. In examining this problematic, I shall be

focusing on the question of time, space and location in the work.

What I would like to posit is that the temporal and spatial configuration of *Win, Place or Show*, by virtue of its reciprocal relationship to the experienced patterns of spatio-temporal perception and interpretation within the world of the viewer, is a key site where the meaning of the work is produced. It is thus not merely through the textual discourse around the work (as within the art-historical context examined hereinbefore), but through the work's specific spatio-temporal formulation, irreducible to a priori art-historical or sociological categories, that the work's meaning is implicated in larger social formations and historical processes. As such, my discussion here shall comprise a basic overview of a range of theoretical positions respecting the sociology of spatial practices and the consideration of space-time representation in narrative and visual culture; this theoretical synthesis, in conjunction with the contextual framework proposed in Chapter 1, will subsequently be applied to the analysis of *Win, Place or Show* in the chapter which follows. As I shall be arguing in the following chapter, *Win, Place or Show* does not merely function within the generic space-time configurations that produce meaning within narrative and visual culture, but actively and explicitly manipulates these interpretive norms in the interest of deconstructing their semantic logic and revealing the political and ideological terms of these forms of representation.

The relationship of time and space in the narrative is given its most original and expansive formulation in the work of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. In his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," Bakhtin

deliberates at length on the question of how the novel's social and aesthetic meanings are intrinsically interwoven with its particular spatio-temporal structure and treatment.²⁴ *Chronotope* (literally "time-space") is the term that Bakhtin applies to this fluid textual interaction. "Time, as it were," he writes, "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."²⁵ In Bakhtin's conception of the literary narrative, it is in the reciprocal (or to use Bakhtin's term, *dialogical*) interaction of all of the elements in the text that meaning is produced; as such, the formal and spatio-temporal (or *chronotopic*) structure of the work is involved at all levels in the configuration of narrative and plot, by mutual recourse to all of which the work's meaning is determined. It is important to note that the term 'chronotope' is never defined in a fixed manner and that the author employs it in several different ways throughout this essay; this becomes evident in his exposition of the various chronotopes in ancient, folkloric and modern literary works.

Bakhtin identifies three dominant chronotopes in his analysis of the ancient novel: the "adventure novel of ordeal" (exemplified by Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* and Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*), the "adventure novel of everyday life" (of which Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* and Petronius' *Satyricon* are exemplary) and the "ancient biography or autobiography" (those of Plutarch, Suetonius, Cicero, Seneca, St. Augustine, etc. which are divided into a range of further subgenres). These ancient

²⁴ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," 84-258.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

chronotopes are in turn compared and contrasted with respect to their specific treatment of time and space; for instance, in the "adventure time" of the ancient Greek romance that typically unfolds between the forced separation and reunion of two lovers, there is a sequential series of adventures and events in the complete absence of any historical, biographical or maturational duration, against the background of an infinite expanse of abstract, interchangeable (often foreign and exotic) space. The second type of novel, by contrast, is marked by a distinct maturational or "metamorphic" duration ("everyday time") and a more concrete rendering of space that correspond to the main character's actual course of life and travels. The "biographical time" of the third category is purely a function of the recounting of symbolic and noteworthy events - public deeds, speeches and accolades - accumulated by its subject within the space of the public square.

Bakhtin defines and examines in similar detail a diversity of other chronotopes throughout folkloric and modern literature; these various time-space configurations may be characteristic of generic literary forms (such as the 'chivalric' and 'idyllic'), or they may be specific to individual writers or works (such as the folklore-based 'Rabelaisian' chronotope that governs the world of temporal and spatial relations in the work of Rabelais).

As such, the author demonstrates the flexibility of the concept of the chronotope as well as the ways in which this mode of analysis of narrative works may provide the basis for a rethinking of traditional generic and stylistic categories. It is in Bakhtin's descriptions of modern chronotopes that the role of space is particularly stressed, and in which the term

'chronotope' itself acquires another distinct meaning - that of the *location-specific* rendering of time and space within the text. For example, the *road* - a central location in the 'chivalric', 'romantic' and 'picaresque' novel - serves as a place of encounter that is characterized by the collapse of social distances. Likewise, the *threshold* - such as the stairs, corridors and vestibules that are characteristic places of action in the novels of Dostoevsky - provide the setting for *crises* and *breaks* in the "metamorphosis" chronotope. The chronotope of a particular 'social space' in the novel can be seen in the space of parlors and salons in the novels of Balzac and Stendhal, where encounters occur, dialogue flows, and a social sphere builds into what Bakhtin calls a "new social hierarchy."²⁶ It is thus through Bakhtin's complementary examinations of ancient, folkloric and modern chronotopes that a fuller understanding of this flexible concept emerges: the creative and interpretative operation whereby temporal and spatial modalities are mutually configured and where "the knots of narrative are tied and untied."²⁷

In the concluding remarks to his essay, Bakhtin both expands and somewhat clarifies the concept of 'chronotope'. The author states that a single chronotope may encompass any number of other chronotopes; moreover, chronotopes may be interwoven, simultaneous, oppositional, contradictory, etc. The relationship among chronotopes is, evoking another of his key terms in its broadest sense, *dialogical*. Furthermore, Bakhtin applies the term 'chronotope' to actual life-world of the reader, stating that "out of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge the reflected and created

²⁶ Ibid., 246-7.

²⁷ Ibid., 250.

chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the text)."²³

Thus, literary chronotopes, for Bakhtin, are dialogically related to the various spatial and temporal patterns of lived experience; the interpretation of time-space configurations represented in the literary text and the real time-space relations within which the reader consumes the work are of necessity fluid and reciprocal.

Though Bakhtin's theoretical discussion is limited to the field of literature and excludes other cultural forms and practices, a number of scholars in recent years have adapted the concept of the chronotope to film and cultural studies. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that Bakhtin's discussion of chronotopes does not address the cinematic medium, given the latter's inherent ability to render temporal and spatial relationships in more tangible terms than is possible in the written text. Perhaps no other medium more than film produces a visual representation of spatio-temporal reality in concrete duration and determinate physical parameters; as such the concept of 'chronotope' would appear ideally suited to discussions of the spatial and temporal categories of filmic discourse and their relationship within the construction of cinematic language and film narrative, as well as to the entire spectrum of time-based visual art that incorporates the moving image.²⁴ Moreover, taken beyond the level of the immanent textual interaction of time and space in the narrative to consider the shared principles that Bakhtin has suggested simultaneously and reciprocally govern the spatio-temporal dimensions of lived experience in the world of the reader, the chronotope would thus seem equally well suited to

²³ Ibid., 253.

the analysis of spectatorship in film and media contexts where the moving image unfolds not only in concrete duration, but in a specific spatial locale. As Robert Stam has written, "whereas literature plays itself out within a virtual, lexical space, the cinematic chronotope is quite literal, splayed out concretely across a screen with specific dimensions and unfolding in literal time (usually 24 frames a second), quite apart from the fictive time/space that films might construct."²⁹ The concept of the chronotope is a richly suggestive analytic approach that might be employed in the broader field of interdisciplinary (and intertextual) cultural and discourse analysis. As Michael Montgomery has written:

Through longstanding artistic usage, chronotopes also become associated with 'fixed expressions' and metaphorical patterns of thinking. As Stallybrass and White have illustrated, all deeply entrenched space and time patterns tend to acquire not only social, but psychological and somatic associations for members of an interpretive community.³⁰

An exemplary interdisciplinary application of Bakhtin's concepts to the study of filmic narrative and questions of space-time, genre and history can be seen in Vivian Sobchack's essay "Lounge Time: Postwar Crisis and the Chronotope of Film Noir."³¹ In arguing for a more critical understanding of the historical and stylistic category of film noir, Sobchack has examined the chronotopes of these and other contemporary film texts — emphasizing the recurrence of transient spaces such as motels, cafés, dancehalls, boardinghouses, train stations and nightclubs

²⁹ Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 11.

³⁰ Michael V. Montgomery, *Carnivals and Commonplaces: Bakhtin's Chronotope, Cultural Studies and Film* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 6. Montgomery cites Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 144.

³¹ Vivian Sobchack, "Lounge Time: Postwar Crisis and the Chronotope of Film Noir," in Nick Browne, ed. *Refiguring American Film Genres* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 129-70.

- in relation to their real-world counterparts and a range of other contemporary sociological and cultural phenomena in the history of 1940s America. In investigating the specific time-space construction of both the film texts and postwar cultural experience that would have made these two spatio-temporal registers mutually intelligible, Sobchack concludes that:

this world (concretely part of wartime and postwar American culture) realizes a frightening reversal and perversion of home and the coherent, stable, idealized, and idyllic past of prewar American patriarchy and patriotism. In short, lounge time is the perverse, "idyll of the idle" - the spatial and temporal phenomeno-logic that, in the 1940s, grounds the meaning of the world for the uprooted, the loose, the existentially paralyzed. Lounge time concretely spatializes and temporalizes into narrative an idle moment in our cultural history - a moment that is not working but, precisely because of this fact, is highly charged.

Sobchack's chronotopic reading of these film texts and their socio-historical context thus offers both a challenge to earlier generic studies of film noir and an enhanced understanding of the particular logic of time and space as both represented and lived in the postwar cultural moment; such a reading also suggests the possibility that the consideration of 'spatial' history through the conceptual structures of literary/filmic construction may have a uniquely revelatory purpose - in extending the limits of concrete, factual observations recorded in the form of historical and sociological data - within the formulation of a fuller understanding of the material qualities of social, historical and spatial experience lived in the past.

The spatial history of the life-world is itself an obscure object of study, if only because the epistemological limits of such an enterprise necessarily render such analysis somewhat reductive. This subject is given its most exemplary and thorough

examination by Henri Lefebvre in his book *The Production of Space*.³² Though Lefebvre's work is not directly concerned with the spatial aspects of film or media, its key ideas have long been incorporated into cultural studies' spatial vocabulary and can provide many useful correctives to the biases implicit in more traditional or rudimentary conceptions of space and spatial practices. As such, I would submit that Lefebvre's ideas might furnish the basis for a far more sophisticated consideration of the spatial dimensions of Bakhtin's chronotopic model.

For Lefebvre, the axis of spatial relations intersects the axes of social and historical relations. Space does not exist a priori as emptiness (as in materialist formulations of it), nor is it simply a mental concept that emerges as a function of cognition (in the idealist tradition); rather, space is *produced*.

The social space of lived action (or what Lefebvre terms "spatial practice") is thus a function of the dynamic relations between objects and products; differing modes of production and social relations thus produce different spatial practices. Situating this idea within a threefold model, Lefebvre argues that *spatial practice* is bound up in a triple dialectic (or *trialectic*, to use Edward Soja's term)³³ with *representations of space* and *representational spaces*. 'Representations of space' refers to conceptual space - the set of dominating relations (ideology, symbols and signs, etc.) that mediates lived experience and conceptual processes. 'Representational spaces' refers to space as directly lived through these symbols and signs - the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'; it emerges from the set

³² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford U.K. and Cambridge U.S.A.: Blackwell, 1991).

³³ See Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace* (Oxford U.K. and Cambridge U.S.A.: Blackwell, 1996).

of relations between spatial practice and representations of space, and is not produced so much as passively experienced. This lived space is thus situated at the intersection of the *perceived* and the *conceived* (i.e. space as empirically observable and space as representation and/or mental construct).³⁴

Having established this conceptual framework, Lefebvre devotes much of his text to the historical reformulation of space (examining the period from the late renaissance to the early 20th century) in relation to the shifting modes of production and social arrangements corresponding to the advent of modernity. Though he acknowledges that multiple spaces can emerge and develop coextensively, Lefebvre considers what he terms "abstract space" to be the dominant spatial arrangement in Western late capitalism. According to Lefebvre, abstract space is defined by optical-visual, geometric and phallic elements. The first of these might correspond roughly to the 'society of the spectacle' – the vacuous psychic and social condition of advanced consumer capitalism – as it is defined by Guy Debord in his work of this name³⁵; the second refers to the specific geometric characteristics embodied in the spatial practices of spectacular society – the straight lines, right angles, grids, etc. of Euclidean space (seen especially in modern architecture and urban planning) that Lefebvre regards as homogenizing and reductive, erasing distinctions and reducing three-dimensional realities to a series of 'exemplary' two-dimensional forms and illusory transparency. The phallic character of abstract space is manifested in the profusion of vertical architectural erections, which Lefebvre reads as visible signs of the state's and

³⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–9.

³⁵ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

capital's monopolistic power of violence and destruction, and which is simultaneously affirmed and disavowed within the tension between geometric and phallic spatial modalities. Lefebvre writes:

Abstract space is *not* homogeneous; it simply *has* homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, its lens. And, indeed, it renders homogeneous. Its geometric and visual formants are complimentary in their antithesis. They are different ways of achieving the same outcome: the reduction of the 'real', on the one hand, to a 'plan' existing in a void and endowed with no other qualities, and, on the other hand, to the flatness of a mirror, of an image, of pure spectacle under an absolutely cold gaze.³⁶

Thus for Lefebvre, the abstract space of late capitalism, socially fragmented and hierarchical, is oriented toward the homogenization of experience and the effacement or mystification of the essential structures of power and productive relations in society.

In putting forth a framework within which the dynamics of spatial practice and of spatial history of the life-world may be examined within the matrix of socio-historical relations and processes, the work of Lefebvre furnishes a critical complement to a chronotopic strategy for cultural analysis. As Bakhtin does not provide us with a complete, all-embracing method by which to approach the reciprocal relationship between the textual interaction of time-space in the work and their corresponding real-world configurations, Lefebvre's historical and theoretical model may be synthesized with a number of efforts in the fields of critical theory and cultural studies in order to more fully conceptualize the spatio-temporal aspects of late modernity; in so doing, we may formulate a fuller understanding of the ways in which the late modern chronotopes that underpin the figurative

³⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 287.

and narrative forms of contemporary literary or filmic texts both reflects and is reflected in the spatial and temporal construction of material experience.

The field of critical theory that has conceptualized the fundamental shifts and transformations in the texture and experience of time, space and subjectivity since modernity – in which domain Lefebvre's work can certainly be situated – have increasingly engaged with these spatial concepts and with their operation within the subjective and objective processes through which the construction of knowledge and experience have been reshaped, particularly within our contemporary post-industrial mode of production, or postmodern epistemological epoch. 'Postmodern' social space, in the view of critical theory, intersects the axes of urban and suburban topography (shopping malls, suburban sprawl, freeways, etc.), fragmentary social relations, and forms of visual culture (such as film and television) that mediate real spaces and their simulacra. Within these discussions, the question of *temporality* and its reformulation is equally critical; just as the production and experience of space emerges from the nexus of social relations and historical processes as Lefebvre has discussed, the construction and experience of time can be understood as a function of changing techniques and discourses within this same socio-historical framework. As such, the reformulations of temporality and of historical time since modernity have been understood within a broader array of coextensive sociological phenomena – the technologies of cinema, the automobile, television, camcorders and digital media – that have collapsed

traditional notions of history's temporal dimensions. As Hayden White has written in his essay "The Modernist Event":

The outside phenomenal aspects, and insides of events, their possible meanings or significances, have been collapsed and fused. The "meaning" of events remains indistinguishable from their occurrence, but their occurrence is unstable, fluid, phantasmagoric – as phantasmagoric as the slow motion, reverse-angle, zoom and rerun of the video representations of the Challenger explosion.³⁷

Reflected in White's remark is a common view that contemporary modes of mediation and of simulation reduce the occurrence and meaning of historical events in late modernity to the historical vacuum of a virtual perpetual present.

The work of Anne Friedberg, in her book *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, has addressed this problematic in the form of the twofold thesis I have previously cited in Chapter 1: that cinematic (and televisual) representation are implicated in the postmodern "disappearance of history" by virtue of their inherent abilities to mediate both visual perception (a "virtual" gaze) and the concrete spatio-temporal dimensions of travel and movement (a "mobilized" gaze). In compounding these terms, the author posits that cinema (and television) constitute exemplary (post)modern cultural forms by virtue of their incorporation and deployment of these two modes of mediation. In Friedberg's view, the implications of the increasing centrality of the mobilized 'virtual' gaze mediating everyday experience – effected not only by forms of visual culture such as film and television themselves, but in the spatio-temporal displacements afforded by the VCR, cinematic remakes, cyber-technologies and other spatially and temporally 'mobilized' and 'virtualized' practices of cultural consumption – are the very qualitative

³⁷ Hayden White, "The Modernist Event," in *The Persistence of History*, ed. Vivian Sobchack (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 29.

transformations identified in recent academic discourse as the hallmarks of the "postmodern condition": a dehistoricized past, a derealized present, and a decentered and detemporalized subjectivity.³⁹ A similar conceptualization of the late modern social and psychic condition is put forth by Margaret Morse in her article "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction," in which the author has examined the analogous spatial and temporal dislocations of television, freeway driving and mall shopping. For Morse, these cultural practices operate on a common principle of *distraction*, what the author defines as "an attenuated fiction-effect" or "partial loss of touch with the here and now."⁴⁰ These effects are a function of these practices' basis in the principle of 'mobile privatization' (a concept developed by Raymond Williams in his writings on television)⁴¹ and derealized space (or *nonspace*, a term borrowed from the writings of Marc Augé that denotes the homogenous, de-singularizing spaces of postmodernity such as airports, bank machines, supermarkets, etc.)⁴² In Morse's view, the "nonspace of private mobility" thus emerges from the nexus of exchange between economic, social and symbolic systems peculiar to late modernity.

The theoretical formulations of critical theory propose a range of heterogeneous spatio-temporal configurations that construct the life-world of late modernity and form the chronotopes of contemporary visual and textual representation. If Bakhtin's has remarked on the capacity of chronotopes to be

³⁹ Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 7.

⁴⁰ Margaret Morse, "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction," in *Logics of Television*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 193.

⁴¹ See Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).

⁴² See Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London and New York: Verso, 1995).

interwoven, simultaneous, oppositional, and contradictory within the literary text, this is no less the case within material-experience; late modernity, as theorized by Friedberg and Morse, comprises a hybrid spatiality and temporality – the 'real' world and its representation overlap not merely at the level of the spatial and historical imaginary, but at the level of everyday perception. The diverse topological patterns of late modernity – not only the "abstract space" of modernist architecture and urban planning discussed by Lefebvre, but also the freeway, suburban tracts, shopping malls, airports, etc. – are configured not with the linear time of traditional history, but with derealized time.

The temporal patterns of late modernity – the mediation of space-time that places events and history within the simultaneity and immediacy of the replay, the freeze-frame and the loop – create a temporality that is perpetually instantaneous, virtually accessible and manipulable. The chronotopes that emerge from within this hybrid space-time nexus, as the infinite spatial and temporal conjunctions of *Win, Place or Show* shall illustrate, are less a generic inventory of fixed time-space forms than an open-ended set of singular and unstable spatio-temporal possibilities.

3. *Win, Place or Show*

At the outset of my investigation into *Win, Place or Show*, I proposed to examine this work through two intersecting lines of inquiry, art-historical and theoretical, which I have attempted to demarcate in the two preceding chapters. In seeking to art-historically situate this work's formal and discursive dimensions, I have considered the thematic preoccupations that underpin Stan Douglas's body of work – in particular the interrogation of the particular social, political and ideological implications, as embodied in specific technologies, political programmes and sets of social relations, that have defined various historical moments within the multivalent process of modernity – and the ways in which the artist has addressed these subjects through the recurrent use of such interrelated figurative and narrative devices as the staging of fictional narratives within time-based artworks, the appropriation of preexisting texts and styles, and the production of elaborate multimedia installations. At the same time, I have sought to locate these strategies within the somewhat broader context of the Vancouver School of conceptual photography, in relation to the sustained engagement within the works of Douglas and his precursors and contemporaries with aspects of urban landscape, social history, and cinematic strategies of representation.

As I have previously stated, *Win, Place or Show* has its conceptual basis in a particular historical moment – the 1960s phase of urban development of Vancouver – as well as in a specific site – the working-class district of Strathcona that city planners had marked in the 1950s for a sweeping programme

for "urban renewal" that would have seen the neighbourhood razed and converted into a grandiose modernist social housing project; this process was in fact only partially completed due to the successful opposition of local residents, property owners and activists. Concurrently, the visual and narrative stylistic elements of the piece – the spare and gritty realism of its action, dialogue and mise-en-scène – evoke certain aspects of the medium of television, in particular the genre of police drama. In fact the action was expressly staged and filmed in the manner of a short-lived CBC television drama, *The Clients*, which was shot in Vancouver in 1968, and which fictionally chronicled the work of probation officers counseling or investigating parolees recently released from local prisons. The show was distinguished by its non-adherence to the cinematographic rules of television drama, as in its use of long takes and eschewal of master shots.⁴²

In this piece, as in his earlier multi-channel installation *Evening*, Douglas addresses the transformations in television's style that were coextensive with the twilight of its utopian and critical potential and with its rise as a mass-cultural mediator of social reality. The complexity of *Win, Place or Show* is thus in part a function of the multiple reflections that arise from its conflation of these two socio-historical registers: the concrete historical reality of Strathcona's urban redevelopment and the mediated "reality" of fictive televisual representation.

Yet moreover, in its weaving of these issues into the multiple topological and temporal layers that are produced within the work's near-infinite looping and spatial reshuffling of the pro-filmic, and in its construction of a historically *counterfactual*

⁴² From Stan Douglas's project description for *Win, Place or Show* in *The Power Plant's Members' Quarterly Newsletter* (Autumn 1999), n.p.

scenario – the fictional re-imagining of a “possible” historical event and spatial history that in fact never transpired – I would argue that *Win, Place or Show* may be located within the very process whereby the social- and spatial-historical imaginary and the material realities of historical experience are mutually configured. I have suggested that manifold norms of spatio-temporal interaction, experience and interpretation (*chronotopes*) between the text and its context may be regarded as sites of convergence and reciprocity for the work’s material and imaginary underpinnings. As such, the theoretical framework I have formulated in the previous chapter is oriented toward the interpretation of the work’s multiplicity of meanings through a consideration of the reciprocal relationship between the time-space union of form within the visual and narrative structure of its representational field, and spatio-temporal patterns as experienced within the concrete sociological and historical processes that the work is engaged in addressing.

Before going further, a more detailed description of *Win, Place or Show* would be in order. The work is a two-channel video installation accompanied by a four-channel soundtrack. Approximately six-minutes in length, this continuously-looping quasi-narrative concerns an exchange between two dockworkers, Bob and Donny, who appear to be sharing a small, one-room apartment on the tenth floor of one of the high-rise dormitory buildings for single working men that was detailed in the redevelopment scheme for Strathcona and planned for construction on Hastings Street, but in fact never built. Included in the work’s installation are enlargements of the architectural plans of these proposed buildings, displayed at the entry point into the viewing

chamber. Also incorporated into some installations of the work is the series of photographs taken by the artist around present-day Strathcona that show the completed phases of its redevelopment, such as the McLean Park housing project [Fig. 8].

Another piece that accompanies *Win, Place or Show* is a photographic triptych of production stills depicting the shooting set (which Douglas and production architect Robert Kleyn constructed in concordance with the actual designs for the unrealized dormitory building in which the action is set), and the different placements of the various cameras that were used in filming [Fig. 9].

In the palpably tense scenario that unfolds onscreen, the younger protagonist Donny tries to initiate the veteran longshoreman Bob in a conversation about his various observations and conspiracy theories, while the latter's reticence seems to give way to annoyance, and eventually, a series of moderate insults directed at the former. Having incited a certain vexation in his co-habitant, Bob in turn proposes a game of chance as a diversion: a five-cent wager on a pair of consecutive horse races to be broadcast shortly on the radio. Displaying the newspaper betting column – and affecting a somewhat condescending tone – Bob attempts to explain the odds of the game to Donny; their edgy exchange quickly devolves into an argument, and then into a physical fight. After collapsing in exhaustion following their scuffle, the two characters separate; Donny picks up the newspaper and reads aloud a joke in a decidedly deadpan manner. The two eventually begin conversing again, then arguing again, then fighting again, and the entire cycle repeats, ad infinitum.

Douglas and his production crew shot the work in several variations of blocking, dialogue and camera movement, with multiple cameras and from two sides of the set simultaneously, thus capturing the action from at least twelve separate and discrete camera angles on each side. The video has been mastered onto two separate laserdiscs that are then projected on a cinematic scale in side-by-side juxtaposition (reproducing the widescreen aspect ratio of cinemascope), rendering an effect that is sometimes almost a seamless picture of the space and characters [Fig. 10], while at other times presenting a radically disjunctive view of the same, with one or both characters on both screens from different angles [Fig. 11], or sometimes even disappearing from view completely. Douglas's description of the shooting plan reveals the work's peculiar relationship to cinematographic conventions; he writes:

Win, Place or Show plays by the rules of cinematographic realism, excessively. For example, a technical convention of both film and television is the system of spatial continuity known as eye-line matching. Continuity in television programs, from hockey to sitcoms, is maintained by shooting most of the action from the same side of the space as if through an imaginary proscenium. This has the effect of making any movement from left to right, appear to move from left to right from all camera positions. In more subjective set-ups, when shots are identified with a character's point of view, the camera angle cannot deviate more than sixty degrees from the 'axis' of a subject's line of sight - toward the invisible proscenium - without supposedly becoming dissociated with their point of view. This two-channel video projection employs the axis method of spatial control; however, it splits it in two because every subjective shot is paired with an identical shot from the other side of the axis, effectively creating a mirror image in real space composed of the tissue which separates inside from outside.⁴³

With the number of camera angles on each side of the spatial axis (in addition to variations in dialogue and performance) thus

⁴³ Ibid.

multiplied, the number of possible recombinations is increased exponentially. The artist commissioned a software programmer to design a dedicated computer program capable of randomizing the sequence of shots, or montage, in real-time during playback while maintaining the video's essential narrative and shot-to-shot continuity. The resulting setup was then programmed to loop indefinitely. According to the artist, there are 204,023 possible permutations of the work; were it to be played continuously, it could take as long as 20,000 hours (or nearly 2½ years) for any one variation to repeat itself.⁴⁴

The repetitive structure of *Win, Place or Show* reflects the artist's longstanding interest in the work of Samuel Beckett; in fact, this piece is perhaps the most Beckettian of Douglas's installations, in the sense that each repetition of the narrative loop renders various differences in dialogue and action, as well as point of view. To quote Douglas:

Almost all of Beckett's plays have this kind of double structure where something happens at the beginning, and the same thing happens at the end – only differently, which I regard as a confrontation with the mechanical world. Something you cannot do with live performance, with humans, is to make them repeat themselves identically.⁴⁵

Thus paradoxically, the work's dynamic structuring along this principle of *chance* introduces the possibility of uniqueness and singularity into the otherwise abstract and deterministic system that sees its two protagonists repeat the same Sisyphean narrative episode, seemingly without end. Although it is the artist who has established the parameters of the piece – its seemingly disinterested and random cutting together of different

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ "Interview: Diana Thater in conversation with Stan Douglas," in Scott Watson, Diana Thater and Carol J. Clover, *Stan Douglas*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 18.

views might suggest the panoptic gaze of video surveillance – once installed it exceeds even his own mastery and control, for as Douglas himself has stated, “No two people can see the same sequence of events that lead to this fight that will never be resolved.”⁴⁶

This paradoxical relationship between determinism and chance functions as both theme and site of tension in *Win, Place or Show*, resonating not only throughout the work’s narrative dialogue, but in its many intricate associations to the social-historical questions it addresses as well. As the character of Donny soberly pronounces,

Some things you don’t have a choice. Like this kid in England watching television. He just sits there, can’t turn it off. His mother comes in, sees him like a zombie and *pow!* The shock of turning it off kills him, right there on the spot. Dead from TV. No one made him watch it, but once he started – game over.

The character’s recounting of this hyperbolic conspiracy theory reflects his paranoia not merely with regard to the possibility of television’s lethal addictiveness, but at the ubiquity of abstract, deterministic systems of social control in general. At the same time, the variations in dialogue that are at the basis of the work’s formal and narrative structure introduce not one, but several different versions of Donny’s conspiracy theory; other unsettling and inexplicable determinisms that dwell in the character’s paranoid imagination concern the forty boats that have sunk off Vancouver’s shore in the past eight years, claiming forty-seven lives (“those boats all had faulty hulls – they proved it” is Bob’s incredulous reply), as well as the

⁴⁶ Stan Douglas, project description for *Win, Place or Show*. The only exception to this, of course, would be if two persons viewed the work simultaneously. The feasibility of any person watching the work for the 20,000 hours required to guarantee the repetition of two identical montage sequences is rather doubtful indeed.

possibility that scientists, in "plotting out how everything moves" with the aid of computers, will soon be able to see into the future.

While these elements of dialogue create an explicitly ironic sense of multiple contradictions on the surface of the work's formal and narrative structure, this tension between determinism and chance more slowly and fully reveals itself within the somewhat more oblique and multivalent intersections between the living space represented in the work, the system of occlusion by which the various camera angles delimit its spatial parameters, and the work's intrinsic reflections on the socio-historical process of modernization, of which both the mass-medium of television and the postwar redevelopment of the city are essential aspects. This fluid and reciprocal organization of text and context in *Win, Place or Show* may be seen to correspond to the conceptual framework whereby the textual patterns of spatio-temporal interaction, or chronotopes, intersect and are mutually configured with the external time-space patterns of lived reality. To a significant extent then, it is through the specific spatio-temporal formulation of its formal and narrative structure that this work exteriorizes its conceptual basis in these broader social formations and historical processes.

If for Bakhtin, the novelistic text is a shifting and unstable entity, continually reshaped by the different historical, ideological and social forces in the life-world, *Win, Place or Show* explicitly enacts precisely such a relationship with respect to the material conditions that determine its narrative and discursive parameters and possibilities. This fluid relationship has its basis in the simultaneous and

conflicting chronotopes that are woven into the work's formal and narrative structure, and which said structure in turn continually reorganizes. We might consider the living space of the two characters represented onscreen, this seemingly oppressive and claustrophobic social space in which the action unfolds, an ideal datum from which to map out the various other chronotopes that overlap at this central site of reciprocal convergence. I would suggest that the architectonics of this onscreen space, as the work's principal spatial axis, might be read in correspondence to the prevailing spatial arrangement of Western late capitalism that Henri Lefebvre has termed "abstract space." Within the latter formulation, the spatial plan of the one-room apartment the characters inhabit – an uninterrupted cubical interior designed along straight lines and right angles – has its basis within the strict geometric formal patterns and functionalist aesthetic of the international style, which can be interpreted as a reductive, homogenizing spatial arrangement. The Spartan modernist aesthetic of the room's interior and furnishings, originally designed in the 1950s with the goal of low-cost mass production and made fashionable in more recent years by the likes of Ikea and *Wallpaper* magazine, would seem to create a spectacle of commodity fetishism.⁴⁷ Emptied of its utopian significance and disconnected from the realization of progressive social objectives that gave rise to it, this space appears to lend itself to what Lefebvre has described as the reduction of the 'real' to the illusory transparency of exemplary geometric forms and the vacuousness of pure spectacle within which the social

⁴⁷ These correspondences between the set for *Win, Place or Show* and the aggressive commodification of the modernist aesthetic in recent years is noted by Daniel Birnbaum in his article "Daily Double: The Art of Stan Douglas," *Artforum*, Vol. 38, no. 5 (January 2000), 91-2.

life of individuals is fundamentally subjugated to the dominating power of the state and capital.⁴⁵ The work's only exterior shot, a seemingly computer-generated view of the skyline at night from the window through sheets of rain, depicts a gridlike arrangement of identical concrete high-rises that mirrors the architectural plans displayed in the anteroom, reinforcing the seemingly oppressive uniformity of the character's living conditions.

This interpretation of the *Win, Place or Show* as a chronotope of "abstract spatial" architectonics is formulated by recourse to the material legacy of Strathcona's McLean Park and similar public housing projects that were realized throughout North America, such as the Regent's Park residential complex in Toronto and the recently demolished Robert Taylor homes in Chicago. Ironically, the problem of "urban blight" that the social and political programme of postwar urban redevelopment had aimed to alleviate – with its concomitant cycles of poverty, violence and lack of hygiene – was not only perpetuated, but has come to be symbolized by these modernist social housing schemes and the flawed rationale of ascetic functionalism along which they were designed. Within the scope of such rationale, the rigid zoning and compartmentalization of neighbourhoods according to which the re-imagined high-rise workers' dormitory occupied by Bob and Donny would have been located at the district's outskirts, isolated from the urban center, other public areas, and family dwellings, would only have served to exacerbate the alienation, social fragmentation and hierarchization that is manifested in their alternately tense and violent verbal and physical exchange [Fig. 12]. "In this sense," Sianne Ngai and

⁴⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 285-7.

Nancy Shaw have written in their catalogue essay on *Win, Place or Show*, "the bird's eye view from Don and Bob's apartment serves as an unrelenting reminder of the way liberal reformers wished to partition the neighborhood in order to valorize the nuclear family and childrearing as the basis of future peace, order and social health."⁴⁵ Thus seen in retrospect, such a process of functionalist segregation may well have had more to do with reinforcing an existing social hierarchy than with fostering a spirit of modern social egalitarianism.

Such a reading of this work as a homogenizing "abstract-spatial" chronotope is of course rendered substantially more complex upon taking into consideration the fluid and mobile spatio-temporal dynamics of its formal and narrative structure and the various other chronotopic patterns that reciprocally converge upon this textual site of time-space and material-imaginary interaction. If on the one hand, the constant shifting of perspective and point of view brought about by the work's chance-based recombination of camera shots destabilizes the strictly-determined spatial parameters of its architectonic set, or *mise-en-scène*, the paradoxical looping of an almost-unrepeatable series of montage sequences disconnects the work's story from the "linear" time of historical representation and situates it within a hybrid and derealized temporality, along which the work's re-envisioning of a counterfactual historical episode, formulated in the present, creates a multiplicity of spatial and temporal vantage points and a near-infinity of event-sequence permutations of that, somewhat ironically, always produce the

⁴⁵ Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw, "Stake/Site/Struggle: Stan Douglas's *Win, Place or Show*," in Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, eds. *Double Vision: Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 2000), 24.

same outcome. These paradoxical spatial and temporal instabilities, within which the modalities of determinism and chance in the work are at once conflated and contradictory, mirror the continual and mutual reorganization of the material and the imaginary within the perception and interpretation of various time-space configurations. In producing a spatio-temporal structure and historical reflection in which the qualities of oneiric and empirical perception and interpretation thus overlap and coincide, *Win, Place or Show* situates itself within the operation whereby the mutual manipulation and redefinition of these two registers of experience is in a continual process of unfolding. As Douglas has written in his project description for this work, "this fictional conflict takes place in a realm of fantasy that still determines the occlusion of space to this day."⁵⁰

The fluid, unstable spatio-temporal parameters of this realm of fantasy, by recourse to which the concrete social and spatial history of late-1960s Vancouver is fictionally reimagined in this similarly expansive and shifting artwork, may be seen to correspond not only to the radical reconsiderations of historical thinking that have thrown into question the ontological and epistemic status of fixed, coherent historical narratives (along with the very notion of history-as-narrative); moreover, they may be interpreted with respect to the fundamental reconceptualization of the material and psychic nature of time, space and subjectivity in late modernity that I have outlined in the preceding chapter. Each of these intersecting problematics

⁵⁰ Stan Douglas, project description for *Win, Place or Show*.

is in turn manifested within the complex chronotopic web of *Win, Place or Show's* multiple, heterogeneous time-space patterns.

In addressing some of contemporary critical theory's challenges to the epistemological status of historical narrative over the past several decades, Hayden White has stated that these recent theories of discourse:

dissolve the distinction between realistic and fictional discourses based on the presumption of an ontological difference between their respective referents, real and imaginary, in favor of stressing their common aspects as semiological apparatuses that produce meanings by the systematic substitution of signifieds (conceptual contents) for the extra-discursive entities that serve as their referents. In these semiological theories of discourse, narrative is revealed to be a particularly effective system of discursive meaning production by which individuals can be taught to live a distinctively "imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence".⁵¹

White has noted that this critical argument – that no form of discourse can provide neutral, unmediated access to a "historical real" – has led historians and cultural theorists to consider the inherent ideological and political implications by which 'historical' as well as fictional discourse, through its formally coherent narrative structure, fosters within social subjects an imaginary yet meaningful relation to their material conditions.⁵²

Fundamental to the traditional historiographical enterprise, which is grounded on the strict distinction between "truth" and "fiction," the consolidation of various accounts into a single coherent and "objective" viewpoint renders absent the more recessive and marginal elements of history. Conversely, *Win, Place or Show's* fictive historical reconstruction through a multiplicity of incommensurable angles and viewpoints enacts precisely the

⁵¹ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), x.

⁵² Ibid., ix-x.

unattainable access to the 'real' that the illusory historical narrative disavows and mystifies. Counter to the single, unified perspective and teleological outlook of the latter, Douglas's work presents a fragmented, infinitely-looping sequence that undermines the possibility of formal coherence. Deconstructing the deterministic "factual" models of traditional modes of historical inquiry, the resolution of each episode is rendered by a near-infinite set of possible recombinations of this sequence of events. In presenting the its narrative as such a myriad of active and random possibilities, *Win, Place or Show* highlights and critiques the shortfalls of historical narratives and their preoccupation with stable *outcomes* and thereby casts a sense of uncertainty on the extent to which historical inquiry may claim to provide accurate, "truthful" representations of the past.

Thus the historical temporality of *Win, Place or Show* is dissociated from a linear, teleological time-pattern not only by the formal instabilities of its looped narrative structure and multiplicity of viewpoints, but by the counterfactual nature of its historical narrativization. While contemporary historical theory may acknowledge historiography to be the production of an illusory or fabulistic discourse oriented toward the interpretation of an inaccessible 'real' lived in the past, the writing of a "counterfactual" history – a "what if" scenario in which one or more factual elements of a history's causal picture and the resultant outcome of events are re-imagined to have happened differently – is regarded by many academic historians as being outside of the domain of historical thought. The practice of counterfactual historical inquiry involves the application of anachronistic assumptions to empirical evidence; it is oriented

toward producing a fuller understanding of historical events and processes through the imagining of plausible alternative scenarios. As Niall Ferguson has written:

Firstly, it is a *logical* necessity when asking questions about causation to pose 'but for' questions, and to try to imagine what would have happened if our supposed cause had been absent. For this reason, we are obliged to construct plausible alternative pasts on the basis of judgements about probability; and these can be made only on the basis of historical evidence. Secondly, to do this is a *historical* necessity when attempting to understand how the past 'actually was' [. . .] as we must attach equal importance to all the possibilities which contemporaries contemplated before the fact, and greater importance to these than to an outcome which they did not anticipate.⁵³

Exceeding the deterministic causal framework of materialist historical inquiry, counterfactual histories are fundamentally bound up with the role of chance in manufacturing particular historical events, re-envisioning what alternative outcomes would have been possible within the same set of causal circumstances had choice or fate acted otherwise; such re-imagined scenarios – though they may observe the above-noted protocol of carefully weighing the odds of each possible outcome against an empirical basis in the interest of 'plausibility' – avowedly belong to the order of the imaginary, temporally overlapping the 'real' of history with the 'virtual' of other historical possibilities. Likewise, the narrative of *Win, Place or Show*, predicated on the question of how the circumstances around the social and political drive toward "urban renewal" in the 1960s could have produced a considerably different outcome – the full-scale overhaul of Vancouver's diversely-cultural working-class district of Strathcona – occupies the virtual and unstable spatio-temporal

⁵³ Niall Ferguson, "Virtual History: Towards a 'Chaotic' Theory of the Past," in *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 87.

register of the subjunctive conditional, or the *could-have-been*.

The relationship of the work's formal structure to its counterfactual narrative formulation thus poses an ironic contradiction vis-à-vis the roles of determinism and chance in producing different historical outcomes: just as the work's innumerable variations in shot sequence produce substantively the same exchange of words and fisticuffs between the two characters, the tension and violence of *Win, Place or Show*'s narrative episode – set within a radically transformed spatial arrangement of Strathcona that might have, but did not materialize – nevertheless may be said to reflect much of the concrete social reality of east-end Vancouver in the present.

It is in this posing of a scenario that extends to such an alternate universe of time and space – beyond the empirical boundaries of historical currents – that *Win, Place or Show* has invited comparisons to the narrative genre of science-fiction.⁵⁴ In destabilizing the linear, past perfect tense of historical representation through looping a near-infinite set of variations of this 'what-if' counterfactual scenario, *Win, Place or Show* produces a "temporal polyphony"⁵⁵ in which both of these orders of discourse and their corresponding time-space configurations may be read as equally subjective, imaginary constructions. Through the ceaseless permutations by which this fictive, derealized setting is presented to the viewer, the work thus simultaneously suggests both the inadequacy of historiography's unified point of view and linear temporal structure as a means of representing the

⁵⁴ See Scott Watson's exhibition review, "Stan Douglas: Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada, February 27 – May 24, 1999," *Art/Text*, No. 66 (August – October 1999), 96–7.

⁵⁵ This term has been used by Douglas in reference to the hybrid temporal structure of many of his multimedia works; see the interview with Robert Storr, "Stan Douglas: l'aliénation et la proximité / Stan Douglas: Alienation and Proximity," *Artpress*, No. 262 (November 2000), 26–7.

mercurial historical 'real', and the inadequacy of a determinate set of historical "facts" to delimit with any certainty the chaotic multiplicity of causal factors through which the present moment has been shaped by the past. As such, *Win, Place or Show* would appear to suggest that social and spatial histories encompass not only those events and processes that are represented within historiography, but also an infinite myriad of unrealized, latent and residual ideologies, techniques and spatial practices.

I have been considering *Win, Place or Show* in terms of its historical reflection, and have argued that what is revealed through the work's narrative and formal strategy is not only the complexity of the social and spatial history of Vancouver's urban redevelopment and its underlying social and political programmes, but also the very process whereby these and other histories are of necessity constructed and given a seemingly-stable coherence within the space-time union of the narrative form that fosters a reciprocal, imaginary relation to the material conditions of lived experience. In destabilizing this formal logic of the historical narrative by presenting a multitude of ever-varying visual perspectives and viewpoints, and temporal shifts and displacements, Douglas's work thus foregrounds these very formal and discursive operations by which the historical imaginary is constructed as a mediator of the inaccessible 'real' by way of the illusory formal coherence of narrative.

If this epistemological reflection on the inherent fictiveness of historical representation is one of the principal themes that emerges from the formal and narrative strategies of *Win, Place or Show*, the question of the role of the formal structures of television and cinema in mediating social reality

also permeates the different layers of this work. The reconceptualization of historical thinking I have discussed above is of a piece with the broader reformulations of time, space and subjectivity within late modernity – regarded in part as functions of television and cinema's spatial and temporal dislocations and their capacity for mediating real space-times and their simulacra – that I have outlined in the previous chapter. Thus the interrogation of historiography by contemporary critical theory, in considering the 'real' of historical representation to be always a discursive construct, produced by mutual recourse to specific spatio-temporal and narrative formal structures, may be regarded as concomitant to its investigation of how the material conditions of both history and the life-world are both reflected in and manufactured by the formal and representational strategies of film and television.

The formal logic of cinema, as I have noted in the preceding chapter, presents spatial relationships in concrete temporal duration with a tangibility that far exceeds the lexical descriptions provided in the novel. However, just as the written text, as a site of reciprocity with its exterior, material context, must negotiate a mutually-intelligible spatio-temporal syntax with respect to the latter, so does the film text follow rules of cinematographic convention in order that the space-time represented within the pro-filmic may be perceived and registered as 'real' space and time by recourse to the spatio-temporal patterns of lived experience. The relatively stable conventions of cinematic realism described by Douglas in his project description quoted above construct the visual syntax by which film and television constitute exemplary simulacra of real

spaces; to recall Anne Friedberg's argument, these forms of visual culture compound and deploy the mediation of spatial perception with that of travel and movement.⁵⁶ If in the view of critical theory, these inherent features of cinema and television are implicated within the fundamental reconceptualization of time, space and subjectivity in late modernity, these issues are accordingly foregrounded within the formal and narrative strategy of *Win, Place or Show*. As such, I would argue that this artwork performs a double reflection on the complex relationship of cinematic representation to the life-world; if on the one hand, its formal logic destabilizes the 'realist' conventions of the narrative film and television drama, on the other, this piece illustrates and engages with the very techniques, effects and discourses that mark the social and psychic texture of late modern experience.

The cinematic conventions of spatial continuity that Douglas enumerates in his project description - eye-line matching, the shooting of action from within the same 180-degree axis of the space "as if through an imaginary proscenium," etc - are oriented toward maintaining clear and unbroken movement and narrative action within the film. In this formal system, the durational aspects of the image are subordinated to and determined by space and movement, in what Gilles Deleuze has otherwise termed the "movement-image."⁵⁷ This system forms the basis of classical Hollywood cinema and television drama, as well as most nonfiction genres, and produces the illusion of a coherent and continuous time and space out of many diverse constituent shots. As I have argued by recourse to the ideas

⁵⁶ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 2-3.

⁵⁷ See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1986).

formulated by Bakhtin, the perception and interpretation of this imaginary, yet coherent space-time, is thus a function of its reciprocal relationship to the spatio-temporal patterns of lived experience; the semantic elements within the film's representational field that produce an illusion of "reality" – with its various social and psychic implications – are thus bound up within its particular spatio-temporal and narrative syntax. It is in this context then, that we may interpret the artist's statement that the occlusion of space (or what we might consider in Lefebvre's terms to be the set of spatial practices that produce and delimit the concrete parameters of the life-world) is determined within the realm of fantasy (or space and time as mental constructs)⁵⁵ – this relationship between lived experience and conceptual processes that is mediated through the system of symbols and signs that in both Lefebvre's and Bakhtin's theoretical formulations may be recognized as underpinning the formal and syntactic structures of representational systems of narrative and visual culture.

As Douglas has described, each of the two juxtaposed images in *Win, Place or Show* is filmed in adherence to the rules of the continuity system; as each of the two laserdiscs contains all of the shots taken from one side of the action or the other, each random cut the computer makes while maintaining temporal and narrative continuity will also maintain the spatial continuity dictated by the principle of *axis of action* (or 180-degree rule).

Thus, while the individual panels of this cinematic diptych upholds the "realism" of continuity cutting – with the notable exception that the shots captured by cameras that are fixed and

⁵⁵ Stan Douglas, project description for *Win, Place or Show*.

unmanned often produce framings that are not necessarily centered on the "action" [Fig. 13], at times allowing the characters to disappear offscreen or into the 'seam' where the left and right images meet – this effect is most radically undermined in the *juxtaposition* of the two images. Counter to the unified sense of perspective with regard to space, action and movement that is both endemic and necessary to cinematic realism, the visual perspective in *Win, Place or Show* is always doubled, dispersed and disjointed. Moreover, whereas in Deleuze's formulation, the spatialization of time produced by the 'movement-image' within cinema's realist system of continuity is always a function of action and movement within the closed system of the frame or set (or what he refers to as its sensor-motor system),⁵³ the filming and cutting together of action from two points of view simultaneously in Douglas's piece exceeds the limits of these principles. The movement of the characters does not appear to govern the temporal aspects of the image; indeed, in the random cutting together of seemingly-disinterested perspectives on the action that I have previously suggested evokes the mechanisms of mechanical surveillance, compounded with the work's infinitely-looping formal and narrative structure, it is the *durational* aspects of this double image that are emphasized.

These effects of *Win, Place or Show*'s formal rupturing of the cinematic conventions of realist spatio-temporal continuity may be understood within second category of Deleuze's twofold theoretical reflection on space and time in cinema, what the author has termed the *time-image*. As exemplified in the formal and narrative structure of the European modernist or art film, the

⁵³ Deleuze has defined the movement-image as the combined function of "two facets, one of which is oriented towards sets and their parts, the other towards the whole and its changes." *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, 55.

time-image undermines the movement-image's 'rational' links between shots, breaking with the sensor-motor system by which the action and reaction of movement determines time and space. As a result of what Deleuze considers to be the time-image's incommensurable, or non-rational links between shots, the linear development of narrative action gives way to what the author has alternately referred to as a "virtual image, a mental or mirror image," and a crystal image – that is, a direct image of time.⁶⁰

Deleuze writes:

There are many ways images can crystallize, and many crystalline signs. But you always see something in the crystal. In the first place you see Time, layers of time, a direct time-image. Not that movement's ceased, but the relation between movement and time's been inverted. Time no longer derives from the combination of movement-images (from *montage*), it's the other way round, movement now follows from time.⁶¹

The time-image's incommensurable or non-rational links between shots create disconnected and vacant spaces, which Deleuze, appropriating the term from Marc Augé, calls *any-space-whatevers* [*espaces quelconques*]. Augé has used this term alternately with *non-places* [*non-lieux*], as I have previously noted, to describe the logic of social space in "supermodernity" – the homogenization and fragmentation of experience brought about by the increasing prevalence of anonymous, derealized spaces such as airport terminals, supermarkets and bank machines within which individual behaviour and social relations are uniform and de-singularized.⁶² However, in appropriating this term of 'any-space-whatever', Deleuze invests it with a wholly different meaning: the spatio-temporal disjunctions between shots in the

⁶⁰ Gilles Deleuze, "On the Movement-Image," in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 52.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.

time-image produce not homogeneity, but the possibility of uniqueness and singularity. Deleuze has written:

Any-space-whatever is not an abstract universal, in all times, in all places. It is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as the pure locus of the possible.⁶²

Thus, I would argue that *Win, Place or Show's* juxtaposition of two *movement-images* not only produces a *time-image*, but simultaneously calls our attention both to the very operations by which a mediated "real" is constructed by the formal and narrative structure of cinema, and to the infinity of discursive possibilities and spatial and temporal perspectives and that are rendered absent within this unifying formal structure of conventional cinematic continuity. This work makes palpable the formal structures of the cinematic medium within which our imaginary conceptions of time and space are negotiated, and within which they are subject to manipulation.

Within these terms *Win, Place or Show's* shifting formal and narrative structure both reflects and enacts the same paradoxes and instabilities whereby the certainty of time, space and subjectivity in late modernity is radically thrown into question.

In the myriad ways in which this work undermines the apparent stability of these cultural categories – revealing the oneiric and imaginary within represented "reality," the random within the deterministic, and the singular within the abstract and universal – *Win, Place or Show* foregrounds the impossibility of fixing with any certainty these fluid and reciprocal relations. The precise

⁶² Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, 109.

. ontology of this intricate and multivalent work, like the social and spatial histories it addresses, remains an open question.

Conclusion

Win, Place or Show recapitulates and further develops many of the strategies and concerns that are fundamental to Stan Douglas's body of practice. In its relative investigation into technologies of representation and the social and spatial history of the artist's native Vancouver, this work meticulously draws out and foregrounds the arcane social, political and ideological forces at play within a transitory local moment and locates them within the broader, more fundamental socio-historical processes that have shaped our present social reality. Within this enterprise, *Win, Place or Show* puts into question not only the overarching narratives and ideologies that inform and rationalize these processes, but the very discursive techniques that construct and mediate our understanding of them.

I began the present study with a selective survey of Vancouver art in the past three decades in the interest of highlighting, via a contextualization of the formal and thematic elements of *Win, Place or Show* within Douglas's body of work and that of other artists in this milieu, the basis of much of this art production within a sustained preoccupation with social commentary. From the beginnings of an urban critique in the late 1960s within the early photo-conceptual projects of Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace, through to Wall's equally seminal mode of social-historical inquiry as manifested in his large-scale backlit photographic tableaux, and the cinematic strategies that have more recently become a key feature of much contemporary art work in Vancouver, the diversity of specific techniques and concerns that have developed along this trajectory exhibit a strong and

clearly identifiable orientation toward the production of art work that examines social issues. This is not to de-emphasize the possibilities of immanent formal and stylistic exploration within these art-historical developments, nor to gloss over the art-historical relationship between photo-conceptualism and coextensive movements in art such as structuralist experimental film, whose tendencies were ostensibly more toward a programme of formalist innovation. If Douglas's *Hors-Champs*, as Peggy Gale notes, evokes the similar formal design of Michael Snow's double-sided film *Two Sides to Every Story* (1976), we may see many parallel references in *Win, Place or Show* to other examples of structuralist film works, such as to the concurrent spatial-perspectival delimitation and durational amplification in Snow's *Wavelength* (1966-67), and particularly to the permutating repetitions of David Rimmer's classic of Vancouver structuralism, *Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper* (1970).⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Douglas's projects, like those of his photo-conceptual precursors and contemporaries, take as their point of departure the social reality of everyday life, engaging with the interconnected material phenomena of urban and suburban topography, modernist architecture, and capitalist production and consumption, with their concomitant effects of environmental despoliation, social and economic inequality, alienation, and the technological mediation and manipulation of historical memory. It is the examination of these issues that provides the

⁴⁴ Peggy Gale, "Stan Douglas: Evening and Others," *Parachute* 79 (July-August-September 1995), 26. Rimmer has repeatedly played down the notion of social commentary within *Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper* stating that the film "is not about the serialized, repetitive nature of factory labour, or the ghettoization of women in this type of work, but rather the nature of cinematic representation and signification." Maria Insell, "Independent Film After Structuralism," in Stan Douglas, ed., *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, 107.

conceptual basis for Douglas's works, and which the sophisticated formal tactics and narrative strategies the artist develops throughout his practice – such as the appropriation of local and historical styles and idioms of representation, the staging of fictional narratives, and the production of multimedia installations – are oriented toward addressing. Like his Vancouver colleagues, as Gale has written, Douglas demonstrates “an aptitude for synthesis and cross-reference between media and periods, an ability to apply research tools yet benefit from chance discoveries and intuitions.”⁶⁵ In so doing, the artist not only appropriates, but throws into relief the contrasting styles and formal conventions of these forms of representation, creating from them a sense of discordance and disidentification by their combination or juxtaposition that collapses their immanent stabilizing logic, and by extension, the ideologies that are inherent to and surreptitiously promulgated via these formal and discursive channels.

This intermedia approach is exemplarily expressed in *Win, Place or Show*, in which the viewer is presented with a moving image whose scale and aspect ratio are referenced to cinema, but whose perplexing looped narrative and randomized montage create a situation without parallel in the history of film. And if the work appropriates the aesthetic of low-budget 1960s television drama, the strict modes of attention associated with gallery art viewing is significantly at variance with the distracted gaze of our everyday consumption of television images. In identifying the late 1960s as a critical moment in the history of film and television, in which the renegade, self-reflexive documentary

⁶⁵ Gale, “Stan Douglas: Evening and Others,” 27.

techniques of *direct cinema* and *cinéma-vérité* are appropriated into mass media and fictional narratives as signs of the "real" – as exemplified in the "use long takes, the absence of master shots and inarticulateness of certain characters"⁶⁶ that accounted for the sense of "realism" in CBC's *The Clients* – Douglas deconstructs these formal conventions within the production of a distancing, irresolvable narrative loop that foregrounds their very status as formal conventions. In *Win, Place or Show*, the question of spectatorship is thus a critical one, for it is herein that this work highlights the terms and principles of our relationship to the real material conditions that are mediated via these representational technologies and devices.

What I have thus attempted to illustrate through my analysis in the present study is the ways in which the production and occlusion of filmic space in Douglas's piece thus mirrors the control of social space and how these processes are reciprocally bound up within the narrative and spatio-temporal patterns that construct our mental conceptions of these registers. Simultaneously functioning within and appropriating the very mediating processes whereby everyday spatial practices and historical memory are mutually configured, delimited and manipulated, *Win, Place or Show* thus highlights the social and political stakes of representation within the fundamental negotiation of subjectivization and social reality.

⁶⁶ Stan Douglas, project description for *Win, Place or Show*.

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Fig. 1 Stan Douglas, *Win, Place or Show* (1998).

Two-channel video projection, four channel soundtrack. 204,023 variations with an average duration of 6 min. each. Dimensions variable. Edition of 2. Installation view at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1999.



Fig. 2 Stan Douglas, *Michigan Theater*. From 'Detroit Photos' series (1998).

Cibachrome print. 18 x 22 inches (46 x 56 cm).



Fig. 3 Jeff Wall, *The Destroyed Room* (1978).

Cibachrome transparency, plexiglas, fluorescent lights. Image, 152.4 x 203.2 cm. Collection: National Gallery of Canada.

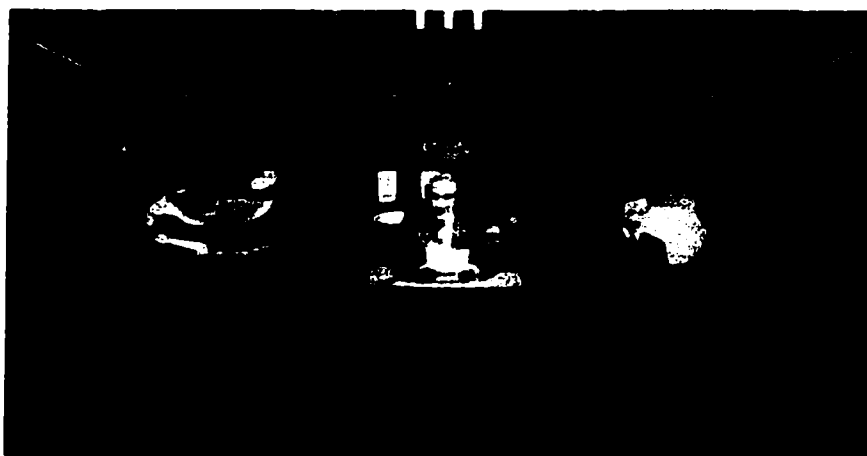


Fig. 4 Stan Douglas, *Evening* (1994).

Three-channel video projection with sound. 14:52 min. each rotation. Dimensions variable. Installation view at the Renaissance Society, Chicago, 1995.



Fig. 5 Stan Douglas, *Der Sandmann* (1995).

Two-track 16mm film projection with stereo soundtrack. 9:50 min. each rotation. Dimensions variable. Edition of 2. Installation view at the 5th International Biennale in Nagoya-Artec '97, Nagoya, Japan 1997.

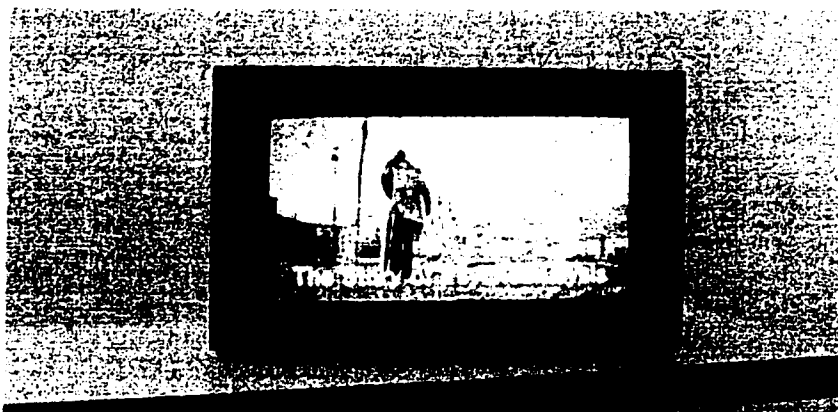


Fig. 6 Mark Lewis, *Two Impossible Films (The Story of Psychoanalysis)* (1995-1997).

35 mm film transferred to DVD. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery.



Fig. 7 Rodney Graham, *How I Became a Ramblin' Man* (1999).

Video/sound installation. 35 mm film transferred to DVD. DVD player, projector, 4 speakers, AV receiver. 9 min. loop.



Fig. 8 Stan Douglas, *West Tower of McLean Park*. 'Strathcona Series' (1998).

Cibachrome photograph. 18 x 22 inches (46 x 56 cm).



Fig. 9 Stan Douglas, *Untitled (Set for Win, Place or Show)* (detail) (1998).

Cibachrome photograph - Triptych. 30 x 40 inches each (76 x 102 cm).



Fig. 10
Stan
Douglas,
Win, Place
or Show
(1998).



Fig. 11
Stan
Douglas,
Win, Place
or Show
(1998).



Fig. 12
Stan
Douglas,
Win, Place
or Show
(1998).



Fig. 13
Stan
Douglas,
Win, Place
or Show
(1998).