

Installation Art and Viewer Participation:
A Video Based Study of *The Dark Pool* by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

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ABSTRACT

Installation Art and Viewer Participation: A Video-Based Study of *The Dark Pool* by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

Vesna Krstich

This qualitative video study documents how physical experience within contemporary installation art aids or confounds the interpretation of meaning. For this thesis, I use Lachapelle's (Informant Made Video) method to study how three adult participants with different levels of art expertise respond to the multimedia sound installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller entitled: *The Dark Pool*. Installation art differs from traditional art forms and art viewing experiences because of the physical and multi-sensory relationship between the viewer and the work. *Viewers* must become active *participants*. However, museum visitors may or may not acknowledge or understand the additional responsibilities required of them once inside an installation. By examining how active participation within installation art unfolds within a museum setting, I illuminate how participants behave and interact within the work.

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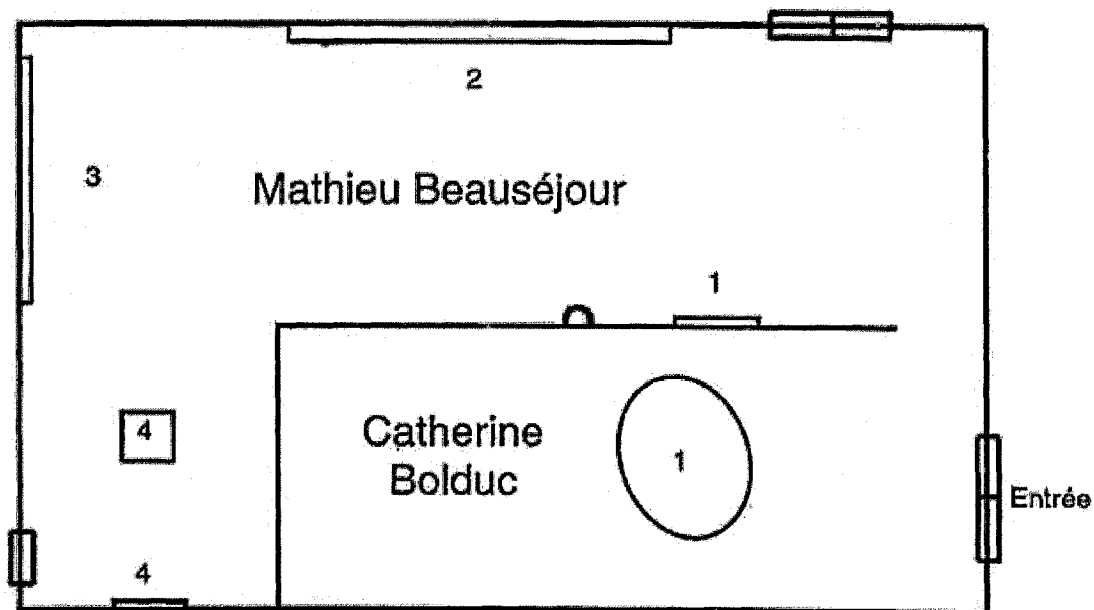
INTRODUCTION

We have said that space is existential; we could just as well have said that existence is spatial. - Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Spatial experience is multi-sensory and multifaceted. Our perception of actual space can challenge and stimulate us physically and psychologically. The corporeal relationship between the viewer and the art form may elicit similar types of responses. My interest in contemporary installation art stems from my longstanding fascination with the co-extensive space of Baroque architecture, Zen tea rooms, and theatre – experiences that incorporate the viewer within the space of the work.

The Pilot Study

In the past, I conducted a video-based pilot study, which investigated how adult viewers interact with and respond to installation art. My research objective was to explore how a participant's movement through space contributed to his or her art viewing experience. I used two participants in this study: one expert participant with previous knowledge and/or training in fine arts and one non-expert who considered himself to be a *museum-goer*. Each participant was required to respond to two installations with different spatial layouts (Figure 1, p. 2). The first work the participants responded to was Mathieu Beauséjour's installation entitled: *Devil's Face* (2000). Beauséjour's piece consisted primarily of didactic text panels followed by numerous serigraphs, a video projection, and a display of various animal horns arranged within an L-shaped space. Adjacent to *Devil's Face* was Catherine Bolduc's installation *Affectionland* (2000), comprised of a plethora of found objects like glassware, costume jewellery, and bargain store trinkets. These objects were displayed on an enormous bicycle cart and illuminated



Mathieu Beauséjour : Devil's Face

1. *Panneau Numismatique* (2000), médiums mixtes.
2. *Portrait* (1999), sérigraphies
3. *Devil's Face / Devil's Hair* (2000), Infographie et projection vidéo.
4. *La chasse aux diables* (2000), miroir noir et cornes variées.

Cathrine Bolduc : Affectionland

1. *Affectionland* (2000), médiums mixtes, verre, lumières, chaînes

Figure 1. Gallery Plan for *Devil's Face* and *Affectionland*. Courtesy Galerie Verticale

by a beam of light that cast shadows on the opposing wall. I used documentary video to gather data in two ways. The first video segment allowed me to study only observable behaviours in time by collecting data on the kinaesthetic nature of viewer participation within the given space of the artwork. A second video segment recorded verbal commentary, which enabled me to analyze the participant's responses about each work. By using video to document how each participant's experience unfolded with each work, I was able to capture how viewers behaved within a given installation space, particularly when they were expected to conform to the demands of the physical environment. One of the most significant results of this study was that participants were especially disappointed that they were unable to construct a meaningful interpretation because they were unable to process the connection between certain parts of the work, the position of their body, and the intended message. (Krstich, 2000)

Objectives

For this thesis, I have re-examined my initial question: how do adult viewers interact with and respond to installation art? In doing so, I have made some additional modifications to the procedure and methods for data analysis. The purpose of this thesis research is to document and describe how viewers' bodily experience within the space of installation aids or confounds the interpretation of meaning.

Research Materials

The selected art work for this study, is a collaborative multimedia sound installation by Janet Cardiff and her partner George Bures Miller entitled: *The Dark Pool* (originally installed in 1995 at the Western Front Gallery in Vancouver). *The Dark Pool* was one of several audio installations included in Cardiff's first major retrospective

organized by P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York City. The survey of works, which highlighted the past ten years of Cardiff's career as an installation artist (including her collaborations with Georges Bures Miller), was on exhibit at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from May 25, 2002 to September 8, 2002.

I selected *The Dark Pool* for two reasons. Firstly, viewers must enter into the work by opening an unassuming door built into the gallery corridor, which separates it from the rest of the gallery space. Museum visitors can only begin to experience and fully appreciate the installation once they acknowledge this peculiar entranceway, and most importantly, when they take the initiative to go inside. Secondly, Cardiff and Miller create a complex auditory labyrinth. They transform museum visitors into active participants by allowing them to activate and interact with numerous audio devices, which are scattered amidst the clutter of various found objects. *The Dark Pool* installation envelops those who take the initiative to walk inside. Upon entering, participants cross the threshold of the neutral gallery space and encounter a highly evocative atmosphere with indefinite pathways for exploration.

Rationale

The literature on installation art suggests that viewers must become actively involved with the work. However, recent literature argues that viewers face potential obstacles in their attempt to experience and create a meaningful encounter with different installations. This is because of inhibitions, invasion of personal space, or confusion about where, and how to proceed within the actual space of the work. Nevertheless, the majority of the literature on installation art does not fully examine the issue of non-participation, why and how it occurs – and especially how one can alleviate or

circumvent this problem during the viewing process. Therefore, this study will contribute to better understanding of how inhibiting factors affect interaction and the construction of meaning with installation art. Although researchers are examining how viewers respond to works of art (Lachapelle, 1999), there is a lack of qualitative data focusing directly on the issue of active participation with installation art. Results from my own pilot study reveal that participants encounter obstacles when viewing or experiencing installation art that interfere with their own movement and interaction. Therefore, additional research will help to examine the nature of viewer participation, and how body and space play a role in affecting aesthetic response.

The research that I present in this thesis will help contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenological relationship between body and space in art viewing experiences, the way bodily experience informs the construction of meaning, and will help identify the inhibiting factors that impede physical interaction with installation art within the museum setting. By studying how active participation unfolds within installation space through qualitative video research, we can gain a better understanding of the experiential nature of installation art.

Preview of Chapters

I have divided this thesis into six chapters. In Chapter One, I begin by defining phenomenology and its relevance to understanding active participation within installation art. This chapter also clarifies the term *viewer response* as it relates to art viewing experiences and the methodology that I use for this study. Here I further examine the physical relationship that exists between the viewer and different art forms such as painting, sculpture, and architecture. Specifically, this chapter examines how

experiencing installation art differs from traditional art viewing experiences. In the following chapter, I define *installation art* and discuss the roles and expectations imposed upon the *viewer*, how this process functions within the museum context, and what effects these expectations can have on the construction of meaning. The work of Cardiff and *The Dark Pool* installation is the subject of Chapter Three. In this section, I discuss important thematic and artistic concerns encompassing Cardiff's work, particularly those that help illuminate my description of *The Dark Pool* and its intended meanings. Chapter Four describes the methodology, procedure, data analysis, as well as the alterations that I have made for this study. In Chapter Five, I present the findings for each of the participants according to movement, time, and narrated commentary. For the final section, I provide a comparative analysis of the results from the videotaped footage as well as the audio taped interviews according to interaction, inhibition, and interpretation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ART VIEWING EXPERIENCE

In my introduction, I refer to the terms *viewer response* and *art viewing experience*. I relate these terms to interpretation, the experience of movement within installation art, or to the *phenomenological* relationship between the body and space. In this section, I explain the terms viewer response and phenomenology as they relate to the research question. I also discuss my interest in this topic by examining the perceived physical relationship between the viewer and the work of art. I will also demonstrate how interacting with installation art differs from traditional art viewing experiences.

1.1 Phenomenology and Viewer Response

To clarify what I mean by the phenomenological relationship between body and space, I will begin by defining the term phenomenology. Phenomenology is a form of philosophical study, which attempts to describe and uncover the manner in which lived experience unfolds in human consciousness (Lassman, 1996, p. 603). To illustrate this, I cite Husserl's (as cited in Welton, 1999) description of how the whole body is responsible for perceiving the surrounding environment through its action as a subject. Husserl (1999) refers to the body as the "medium of all perception" and states, "In seeing, the eyes are directed upon the seen and run over its edges, surfaces, etc. When it touches objects, the hand slides over them. Moving myself, I bring my ear closer in order to hear" (1999, p. 12). According to Husserl (1999), the body "is of significance for the construction of the spatial world" (p. 12). In this respect, the body is the central perceiving subject within the environment. The same is true when encountering an installation because the viewer is responsible for actively engaging with the artwork and

for using his/her own bodily experience in an attempt to construct his/her interpretations within the given environment.

The term *art viewing experience* can also refer to *aesthetic response*. Although there is no definitive definition as to what constitutes an aesthetic response, two major paradigms attempt to describe the kinds of experiences that may occur when viewers engage with works of art. The first paradigm studies the quality of the art viewing experience (Csikszentmihaly, 2000, p. 399). Another paradigm focuses on the cognitive dimension of aesthetic response and studies the series of actions that any viewer initiates in order to understand and appreciate a work of art (Lachapelle, 1999, p.8). The latter does not measure the quality or the ideal experience, but rather attempts to describe any response that takes place during the viewer's encounter with an art object. Since the objective of this video based study is to document each participant's interaction, inhibition, and the manner in which s/he constructs interpretations based on that experience, I plan to follow Lachapelle's approach and examine any response that may occur during each participant's encounter with the installation.

1.2 The Spatial Experience in Art

Some paintings suggest the illusion of space on a two dimensional surface. Although one can perceive spatial depth as visually infinite, the frame or the edge of the support confines the actual space of representation. In sculpture, forms take shape through the process of modeling, assembling or subtracting in order to occupy three-dimensional space. In designing and building an architectural structure, the architect creates a dual relationship between the exterior and interior spatial environment. Etlin (1999) suggests that our responses towards works of art involve a bodily sense of self,

which has a spatial dimension (Etlin, 1999). In other words, our physical relationship with a painting is unlike that of a statue or a cathedral interior because the treatment of actual space is different in each art form. As a result, experiencing the work may require different kinds of interaction from the viewer, and in doing so, can elicit distinct forms of bodily response. The focus of this section is to explore the perceived physical relationship assumed to exist between the artwork and the viewer and question how that dynamic shapes the manner in which people interact with different forms of art. This will ultimately help to clarify how interaction with installation art differs from more traditional or conventional art viewing experiences.

The surface of the two-dimensional support (i.e. the canvass, wooden panel, wall, etc.) and its frame are two important features in painting, which demarcate a specific area for representation. A painter manipulates the flatness of the surface by suggesting the illusion of three-dimensional space, co-extensive space¹, or by creating tensions between advancing and receding colours in non-objective space. Nevertheless, the inherent flatness of the two-dimensional support allows the painting to occupy a specific place, which has traditionally been on the wall. Placing the work in such a way sets up a relationship between the space of the viewer and the space of the painting. In his article, *The Arts and the 'Between'*, Martin (1977) suggests that the physical space “between” the work of art and the viewer can generate certain impacting forces or spatial tensions that ultimately influence how the art viewing experience unfolds with different forms of art (Martin, 1977). In other words, the space can be an empty “intangible bridge”, which serves only as a means to the work of art, or a “tangible” space full of forces and an

¹ A compositional device invented by Caravaggio, which thrusts the illusion of three-dimensional space outward into the actual viewing space in order to involve viewers with the depicted subject matter (Etlin, 1999, p.).

essential part of the perceptible structure of the work (p. 22). When viewing a painting, Martin recommends that spectators must locate a “privileged” frontal viewing position because the work occupies a space on the wall, away from the spectator. The experience becomes potentially restrictive when the viewer tries to negotiate around the glare of the gallery light or faces a limited range of movement while attempting to examine the different parts of the work (p. 22). Traditionally, the most significant form of interaction or motion that occurs when examining a two-dimensional work of art hanging on the wall happens with our eyes and not our bodies.

A sculpture, on the other hand, by the very nature of its medium and form, occupies a specific place in space and in doing so, engages the body through actual movement. The dynamic between the viewer and the sculpture is one, which creates the anticipation of form or the need to seek greater perceptual fulfillment because it motivates the viewer to move around the work (Martin, 1977, p. 23). Husserl (as cited in Rawlinson, 1999) defines the moment of seeing an object in space as “incomplete” because visual perception of any given object never fully reveals all its sides and characteristics even though the individual can see a unified “thing”(p. 271). As a result, motion makes the various stages of perception intelligible to the viewer or (who Rawlinson refers to as the) “mobile perceiver” (p. 270). In this case, the actual space surrounding the sculpture is integral to the experience because it provides viewers with a place to move around in order to reveal the entire form.

Artistic and philosophical discourse on architecture describes two kinds of spatial experiences that pertain to bodily participation within and through architectural forms as “circumambient” or “centred” space and “lived” or “living” space (Etlin, 1999; Martin;

1977). In the 19th century, *Einfühlung* (empathy) philosophers began investigating the psychological relationship of “lived” space as it occurs in the formal features of architecture such as line, mass, form, and rhythm (Etlin, 1999, p. 6). In the 20th century however, Scharmarow (as cited in Etlin, 1999) faulted his fellow *Einfühlung* philosophers for favouring the formal features and ignoring the bodily experience of moving through a sequence of spaces or passages within an architectural structure (what Le Corbusier refers to as “*la promenade architecturale*” or “the architectural promenade”) (p.8). For Scharmarow (1999) the experience of architectural forms in lived space is better understood as “circumambient” because it involves the space around the viewer, and is rooted in the viewer’s felt or imagined internal orientation system or “personal inner axis” (p.8). Martin’s (1977) definition of “living” space also emphasizes the importance of the entire body as a “configurational center” in the experience of everyday space such as rooms, gardens, and houses because of the way these places infiltrate our senses and record the position of things within the environment (p.28). The “between” in architecture becomes a part of the inner and outer perceptible structure - a “centered” space where one can feel the “positioned interrelationships of things organized around some paramount thing as the place to which the other things seem to converge” (Martin, 1977, p. 26). Martin (1977) attributes the “overwhelming dynamism” of “centered” space to the belief that it “propels us out of ordinary modes of experience in which space is used as a means” – not as a “receptacle but a context energized by the embrace of positioned interrelationship of things” (p. 27). In that respect, architecture is similar to installation because the actual spaces of these art forms are just as tangible as the physical

materials inside. The encounter prompts the viewers to navigate, interact, absorb, or react to various sensory stimuli produced by the amalgamation of different elements.

So far, I have discussed the dynamics of actual movement in our experience of with different types of art forms, the spaces they occupy and create and how perceived physical relationships shape interaction. Viewers confront a limited range of motion when standing *in front* of two-dimensional works of art, they must move *around* sculptural forms, and they must explore the passages *within* architectural environments. The body serves as the central perceiving subject within these encounters despite the fact that dynamic or type of interaction changes with each art form. Traditionally, our participation with a single work of art can elicit these types of experiences and yet, how does the “positioned interrelationship of things” alter this experience? What can we say about the context or environment in which these experiences take place? How does arrangement change our spatial interaction and the way we construct meaning from the work - or a variety of works? The term “participatory art” describes public art forms such as architecture, monuments, gardens etc. that can not be adequately appreciated unless the viewer is physically present and behaving in a prescribed manner as required by the work of art (Novitz, 2001). In an attempt to define “participatory art”, Novitz (2001) distinguishes between a “discrete” work and a “compound” work (p. 154). The discrete work of art does not consist of any other work of art or pieces and therefore can stand alone (i.e. a painting), while the compound work is a product of a variety of discrete works (i.e. a church or temple) that function simultaneously (Novitz, 2001, p. 154). I have already stated that architectural structures create an internal and external environment for the viewer to experience. Much like installation art, the spaces can offer

multiple routes for exploration and consist of an amalgamation of various objects and other art forms. A painting on the wall still allows us to approach it in a certain manner, several paintings and sculptures within an architectural setting (or installation for that matter) can alter how we connect and experience these works as an ensemble. Similarly, the placement and installation of a single piece of art can affect the manner in which the public experiences the work of art.

1.3 Installation Art vs. Traditional Art Forms

The experience of looking and responding to art works in whatever medium or artistic period can be problematic and vary according to each individual. This is because each person brings with him/her a wide range of artistic experience, knowledge, and expectations when in the presence of artwork. For instance, Lachapelle (1999) has found that experts use their background knowledge, while non-experts, refer to their own personal experiences, and affect (p. 19). Therefore, lack of skills and background information inhibit people from engaging with works of art, which makes the construction of knowledge a key role in the art viewing experience (Csikszentmihaly, 2000, p. 401). Clear goals are also lacking as far as people do not know what to do when in front of an artwork (Csikszentmihaly, p. 403). Furthermore, the average person spends only a few seconds in front of the work, before resorting to quick and subjective value judgments (Anderson, 1993, p. 199). Often the entire museum setting can intimidate the visitor because of confusing layouts, organization, and physical surroundings that disrupt concentration (Csikszentmihaly, 2000, p. 403).

I will argue that the problems viewers face which can prevent or inhibit them from engaging with a work of art are even more intensified with installation because of

the role the body plays within the space of the work and how that relates to movement, time, setting, and the way participants construct meaning. In *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Danto (1981) asserts that art is “about” something and demands interpretation. By making an interpretation, or offering a theory about the work’s meaning, viewers engage in a procedure that transforms the object into a work of art (p. 120-125). Duferenne (1973) refers to this unfolding process as the artwork’s transformation from “potential to actual existence” (p. 19). Viewers must become active participants inside an installation and in doing so; they must construct meaning based on their physical bodily interaction (Gonzales, 1998). The work requires that participants move away from static interaction towards kinaesthetic movement through space and its organization. If visitors have problems moving through a museum space as Csikszentmihaly points out, one can imagine how the physical space of an installation can disrupt concentration and the viewer’s attempts to create meaning. Furthermore, installations vary tremendously according to their spatial organizations and levels of interactivity. Consequently, the idea of not having clear goals in front of a work increases with multiple viewpoints for one’s spatial perception, which challenges how a person moves through the installation in comparison to other artworks such as paintings and sculptures. Being physically present is so important in order to experience an installation because of its multi-sensory nature, which means that the viewer must also process information activated by his/her senses in addition to what s/he is seeing when trying to understand the work. Moreover, installation artists intend that participants navigate through the work so that they can create connections between their own experience and the different parts of the work. This is one of the reasons why individuals

must experience an installation while it is on exhibit because the work relies on viewer for its activation. Viewing the work from a secondary source such as an installation shot, removes the feeling of presence, the sensory information that accompanies this encounter, and the unfolding process. Finally, the art expert in my pilot project only refers to her art related knowledge in a very limited way. Ultimately, she does not rely on her background knowledge in fine arts when attempting to interpret the installations, even when the layout and content confuses her (Krstich, 2002). In this case, the expert's art viewing experience is different from Lachapelle's (1999) informants, who use their background knowledge in art to help them come to a greater understanding of the artwork (Lachapelle, 1999). This occurrence leads me to question how physical interaction may precede historical and/or theoretical knowledge of art when experiencing and interpreting an installation.

The art viewing experience is an unfolding process in which the body plays a dominant role. Our physical relationship with the work of art shapes how we experience the work because different art forms may require different forms of interaction. Installation art is unlike more conventional or traditional forms of art because it presents participants with added responsibilities within a given spatial environment. The underlying goals of installation art create a unique set of expectations for museum visitors. In the face of these new challenges, various inhibiting factors may deter potential participants from actively engaging with the work in the intended manner. In the following Chapter on installation art, I elaborate these issues by examining the

relationship assumed to exist between the installation, *participant*, and the interpretive process.

CHAPTER TWO

INSTALLATION ART

2.1 Defining Installation Art

The *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics* (1998) defines Installation Art as a term that came into existence in the 1960s to describe “temporary, site specific works designed to surround or interact with the spectator and/or extant architecture in a given exhibition space”(Gonzalez, p. 503). Installation art emerges from the Environments and Happenings of the late 1950s, when artists seeking to redefine the role and function of the work of art began revolting against more conventional and market driven forms of artistic expression (Gonzales, 1998, p. 503). Essentially, the focus of installation art is to disrupt the “traditional semiotic and somatic boundaries assumed to exist between the audience and the art” by allowing the audience to use their bodily experience to explore their own interpretations and construct meaning from the installation (p. 503).

For the purposes of this thesis, the distinction between the term *site-specific* and the act of *installing* requires further clarification. In a site-specific installation, the location of the work helps inform the content and the choice of material. Therefore, a highly localized reading of the place is necessary when attempting to construct meaning (Ran, 1998; Oliveira, 1994; Suderberg, 2000). In other words, “if the same objects were arranged in the same way in another location, they would constitute a different work.” (Oliviera, 1994, p. 35.) The term *in situ* also refers to site-specific installation because it involves the relationship of the artwork to its external surroundings (Ran, 1998, p. 217). The term Installation Art, on the other hand, comes from the verb *to install* and places

work in the *neutral* void of the gallery. According to Gonzales (1998), the term is “merely a formal designation – derived from curatorial practice – that reveals little about the artwork it defines save for the fact that it has been “installed” at a given site”(p. 503). The focus of installation art practice is on altering institutional and public places through “installation” as an action, which uses ready-made objects, and takes note of the perimeters of space and reconfigures it (Suderberg, 2000, p. 5). The actual site of an installation is part of the content, while the act of installing is a practice in and of itself (Suderberg, p. 5).

Although the term Installation Art is relatively new, it has traditionally been associated with Environments and Happenings, which were spaces and events constructed throughout the city that made use of junk and everyday materials. Viewers had a performative role within these artworks and were encouraged to participate with the work and/or events going on inside (Riess, 1999). The shift in terminology from Environment to Installation was gradual and the terms were used interchangeably to describe works produced at an exhibition site. Not until the November 1993-October 1994 issue of *Art Index*, does the term Installation Art appear as an actual listing, at which time the word Environment ceases to be a category (Riess, 1999).

2.2 Art Historical Roots

A brief examination of the historical roots and precedents of installation art helps to identify the evolving pattern of attempts to implicate the viewer with artworks through the treatment of space. Although installation emerges out of the Environments and Happenings of the 1950s, the historical roots of this form of practice trace back to Dada and Surrealism. In *Ideology of the White Cube*, O'Doherty (1999) writes about a series

of ‘gestures’² that went on inside the gallery space in the beginning of the twentieth century. As an example, O’Doherety (1999) refers to Marcel Duchamp’s *Mile of String* (1942), which Duchamp created by weaving a continuous mile of string through out the gallery, treating the space as single unit. In an effort to manipulate the aesthetic encounter, defy the space of art, and the social space of the viewer, Duchamp challenged what the audience could tolerate, and the way they approached works of art (O’Doherety, 1999). Constructivist artists also explored the possibilities of space and different materials in their attempts to emphasize the theatrical experience of viewing art. For example, Kurt Schwittzer’s *Merzbau* (1923) combined three-dimensional collage and architectural forms to create a room-size environment or a single space in which the viewer could enter (O’Doherety, 1999). During the 1970s, the situational aesthetic of Minimalism also shared affinities with installation art practice. At this time, Minimalist artists began questioning how the spectator (or “Beholder”) could interact and experience the art piece within the space of the gallery. As a result, the temporality of the work becomes an important component of the art viewing experience (Riess, 1999).

2.3 Shifting Roles: From ‘Viewers’ to ‘Participants’

Viewers are actively responsible for exploring and constructing meaning based on their own bodily experience as a point of departure (Butterfield, 1993; Davies, 1997; Gonzalez, 1998; Kaprow, 1966; Ran, 1998; Weil, 1992). Additional findings in the literature clarify the nature of this responsibility, the kinds of expectations imposed on the *viewer*. The literature also elucidates the manner in which installation art creates a new dynamic for interpreting meaning.

² O’Doherety (1999) defines ‘gesture’ as an action made to emphasize ideas, emotions, which is often made for effect or its immediate impact on the viewer (p. 105).

The changing role of the viewer from that of *passive observer* to *active participant* is officially indebted to Allan Kaprow's *Environments and Happenings*, which allowed the viewer to literally enter the work of art, or to become physically encompassed by it (Kaprow, 1966). Installations also force the viewers' awareness and participation by compelling them "to consider the works boundaries and logic - where and how to view the piece and their own movement - whether or not to walk around materials, on them or through them" (Ran, 1998, p. 239). Therefore, the process of viewing these kinds of works provides the participant with multiple routes and vantage points as they decide how they will navigate through the installation. Because these works require active participation in order to impart meaning, there is a sense that without this kind of interaction the work does not exist (Butterfield, 1993, p.29). Installations are dependent on the participant's senses for exploration (Davies, 1997, p.27). As a result, the work comes into presence through the reliance of our multi-sensory experience, movement, and interaction to activate its messages. Weil (1992) claims that installation art creates a much closer relationship between the artist and their audience (p. 105). By providing references to the viewer's everyday environment using familiar, common materials and junk, installation art "demystifies the process of art making, giving more immediate access to the meaning of the work" (Weil, 1992, p. 105).

2.4 Conflicting Roles: Expectations and Inhibitions

Although the literature discusses a system of viewing that takes place within the space of the artwork, there are inhibiting factors that sway viewer participation with installation art. Further examination of how installation art can obstruct or restrain active participation will illuminate the nature of the art viewing experience within the given

parameters of the work. I also identify certain expectations imposed upon *participants* and demonstrate how this effects the interpretation of meaning.

O'Doherety (1999) addresses the issue of viewer involvement with art in the gallery space and its problematic nature. According to O'Doherety (1999), there are a number of confusing roles imposed on the "viewer" such as: participant, spectator, perceiver, vivant, actor, and wanderer (p.39). Apparently, each role has some distinct set of attributes, expectations and perceptual abilities, which differentiates it from that of other roles in an almost hierarchical order. For example, a "spectator" can test speculations and is more sensitive to the effects of the space than an "observer" who merely "notices" or a "viewer" who "feels" (O'Doherety, 1999, p. 39). Critical inquiry and awareness within the gallery depends on the visitor's ability to execute and test certain expectations imposed by the artwork and gallery space. Plohman (2000) argues that some types of art invade the viewer's personal space, which creates a feeling of discomfort, and ultimately compromises the viewing process - a key factor in the lack of participation and acceptance of particular installations that deal with disgusting or horrifying themes (p.22). Sometimes the invasion of personal space is deliberate. The intention behind Conlon's (1999) interactive installation is to disrupt the boundaries between public and private space by increasing visitor awareness about their own actions and behaviours within the gallery setting (Conlon, 1999). The artist deliberately attempts to challenge how participants manipulate or interact with the work, by enticing them to have "an intimate experience in a public space" (Conlon, 1999, p.382). In order to interact with her work, participants must press their bodies up against an interactive

scanning station and manoeuvre their hand in such a way that other gallery visitors may misconstrue this behaviour as masturbation (Conlon, p. 382).

2.5 Museums and Galleries

The museum environment can confound the viewer as much as the art itself in the ways it encourages, or in some cases, discourages certain behaviours. According to Riess (1999), the emergence of installations offer museum visitors a chance to actively participate with the work in an effort to change the atmosphere of the museum by making it more accessible and by breaking the rules of decorum (p. 78). However, the traditions of museum etiquette only reinforce the visitor's inhibitions and potentially to ruin his/her interaction with installation art. Plohman (2000) argues that the historical standards of museum decorum, which outlawed bodily actions like smelling, touching and/or tasting remain infallible - only "the eye and the scope of its capabilities became the safest, most objective, and most sanitary way to nurture aesthetic appreciation" (p.16). Consequently, museum visitors are hesitant about what kind of interaction is permissible and appropriate, whether or not they may touch or get close to the work of art without the fear of setting off an alarm or being asked to step away from the work. How are museum visitors to approach an installation without these consequences? Another problem deals with how the museum staff infringes on viewing autonomy by ordering participation. It is common to see the museum staff and even the artist controlling the viewer experience within the space of an installation (Reiss, 1999, p. 155). Even if viewers want to experience a certain type of installation, they can only go in one at a time, in pairs, or experience the work with a group of other people. Perhaps there is even a specific time when the public can experience a particular installation.

2.6 The Search for Meaning

Some critics return to the main element in installations – the use of space as a possible way to investigate the effectiveness and the artistic merit of the work. Reiss (1999) states that, troubles in defining installations as “genre” depends on how successfully they incorporate space (site-specificity), and viewer participation (p.149). The issues surrounding spatial organization also raise important questions about aesthetic response and interpretation. Navigation through installation space can present the participant with an indeterminate route and/or multiple vantage points, and sensory stimulation. According to Jones (1993) participants must “search for the work” when they encounter an installation (p.34). If participants must rely on their own physical interactions within the space of the installation, then the interpretation of meaning “undergoes reconfiguration in respect to the self and the work, which has no fixed position” (Crowler, 1995, p.11). Crowler (1995) also suggests that, “if meaning is produced in an unstable field, then the relation of the self to the work and the self to its own self understanding are both at best provisional”(p.11). In other words, installation art practice urges viewers to acknowledge the transient format of the work itself, and the fact that it too is unstable and can be re-made in another space. Alterations to the installation not only change the meaning of the work, but the viewer’s position and interpretive process within that space as well. Consequently, there is no clear indication about how to proceed, making the field of meaning difficult to find in respect to body/space interaction.

The subsequent chapter on *The Dark Pool* provides a more concrete example of how an installation artist, like Cardiff, constructs spaces. Janet Cardiff manipulates

sensory information in order to implicate participants and urges them to take action – even within a potentially unsettling environment. This chapter also presents an overview of her installation practice, a discussion of the some salient themes found in her work, and a detailed description of *The Dark Pool* and its intended meanings.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DARK POOL

Listen...is there somebody there?

Sound, narrative, intimacy, memory, fact, and fiction all sensuously intertwine in the work of Janet Cardiff. To fully appreciate the inherent secrets of *The Dark Pool*, we must first examine the recurring themes and patterns found in Cardiff's work.

3.1 Janet Cardiff

Calgary based artist Janet Cardiff has received both national and international recognition for her interactive sound installations. In May of 2002, the first major international retrospective of her work entitled *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works, Including Collaborations with Georges Bures Miller*, travelled from the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York City to the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. The artwork on exhibit highlighted the past ten years of Cardiff's career as an installation artist. Senior curator of P.S.1, Christov-Bakargiev (2001), refers to Cardiff's artwork as:

The most perceptually engrossing, emotionally intense and seductive artworks of recent years, they contribute to a shift in the communicational structure of art from a one-sided confrontation between artwork and audience to an exploration of the controversial dimension – the quiet, private realm of talking-listening. (p. 14).

Cardiff's work can be categorized into three groups: the site specific walks which lead viewers around the museum or outdoor settings, cinema-based pieces that play with ambiguities between auditory experience and actual space, and room installations that transform parts of the gallery space into unique environments for exploration (D'Souza, 2002, p. 112). What is common to all these works is the primacy

of sound. Whether it is a whisper heard from an obscure corner of an installation, an intimate voice reciting a story through a pair of headphones, or a symphonic chorus that reverberates throughout the gallery space, the manipulation of sound – or even its absence – serves as the primary agent for participation in a Janet Cardiff installation. In a 2001 interview with Robert Enright, Cardiff states that her main preoccupation is with the “physical aspect of sound” and how that affects the body by heightening viewers’ awareness of their own body and the environment around them (Walsh, 2001, p. 24). Sound becomes a vehicle for action and often the subtext for the piece since the narratives that the audience is listening to guide them through the work. However, these narrative paths do not always have a great deal of coherence. In fact, confusion and a lack of closure are very much part of the auditory labyrinths that Cardiff and Miller stage for the viewer, or what Christov-Bakargiev (2001) refers to as “the quest for narrative” (p. 29). In other words, the audience encounters only fragments of the plot, which lack any sense of continuity between beginning, middle, or end. Like much installation art, the audience is responsible for searching through the work by trying to make sense of the stories and objects on display.

Cardiff draws inspiration from *film noir*, science fiction, cyber punk novels, and the human desire for technological progress when developing the narratives, characters, and settings for her work (Christov-Bakargiev, 2001, p. 28). Her fictive plots unfold with a sense of fantasy, mystery, and uncanny disbelief, which seem contradictory to the work’s everyday settings. The artist makes the audience cognizant of their actual location by incorporating sounds that could presumably exist within that environment, and then she overlays sounds and voices recounting memories and stories that could

belong to anyone. By doing so, Cardiff merges film and reality, memory and perception, artificial and natural to make the audience continually aware of events in which they are not participating (Christov-Bakargiev, 2001, p. 33).

The process of listening becomes an intimate exchange or “co-dependency” between artist and audience (Williams, 1998, p. 62). The voices (which Cardiff, Miller, or other select people narrate) direct the visitor through the space and urge them to take action. Therefore, the participant who triggers the soundtrack is given the indication that the voice addressing them is for them alone - even within the public space of the museum setting.

3.2 The Dark Pool

“She had taken one step into the pool and disappeared, never to be seen again”

The Dark Pool installation represents an important achievement for Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller and marks the first major collaboration between the two artists. The partnership has motivated Cardiff to explore new ways of transforming the gallery space from an artificial construct to “an ideal place in which to explore the suspended and constructed “spaces” of representation itself – the theatres, playhouses, cinemas, and arcades of spectacle” (Christov-Bakargiev, 2001, p. 19).

The story revolves around a dark, shiny pool of water – a scientific and urban legend known as “The Dark Pool”. Cardiff’s fascination with science fiction novels has inspired her to create a story about a Dark Pool - a place, which “could defy all laws of all known science” – an alternate reality in which nothing could float, and where objects could disappear upon contact with the surface (Enright, 2001, p. 31). The environment, according to Cardiff, is also “a metaphor for the brain”...” a metaphor for how artists

work on things that don't seem to make any sense" (Enright, p. 31). By using the analogy of a scientific couple that had been studying the secrets of this magical pool of water, Cardiff and Miller transform an ordinary space into a room that looks like the couples abandoned research study. This room also serves as a portrait of the artists engaged in this artistic process (p. 31). Cardiff and Miller transmit the fictive narratives (see Appendix A) from various speakers around the room. The stories revolve around the voice of an older British woman who is talking about her journey to the Dark Pool, various urban legends pertaining to the pool, and a love story between Allan and Tarah (presumably the scientific couple) (Enright, 2001, p. 32). The audience unknowingly activates the narratives by triggering one of the many motion sensors within the room. As viewers move through the space, they activate different stories and other sounds like footsteps, music, and clanging pipes. In constructing this elaborate and multi-sensory installation, the artists create an environment that feels "as if you'd fallen outside the gallery" into someone's dark and clutter attic (Enright, 2001, p. 31). Throughout the space, scattered pseudo-scientific texts, experiments, apparatus, outdated books and encyclopaedias indicate that one of the key themes is about the accumulation of knowledge and how knowledge becomes outdated (Enright, 2001, p. 32). In an untitled statement, Cardiff (as cited in Bakargiev, 2001) summarizes her and Miller's intention in the following manner:

In The Dark Pool [sic] we were trying to create a space that would give an audience the sense of anticipation and discovery felt when exploring and old attic or an abandoned house. We wanted to haunt the space with an invisible presence. We littered the room with traces of inexplicable activities and objects to provide clues to whom [sic] might have lived there and what they had been doing. (p. 56).

To enter the installation, you must first open an ordinary white door built into the gallery wall. As the door creaks open, you confront a darkened, musty room cluttered with a multitude of found objects (Figure 2, p. 30).

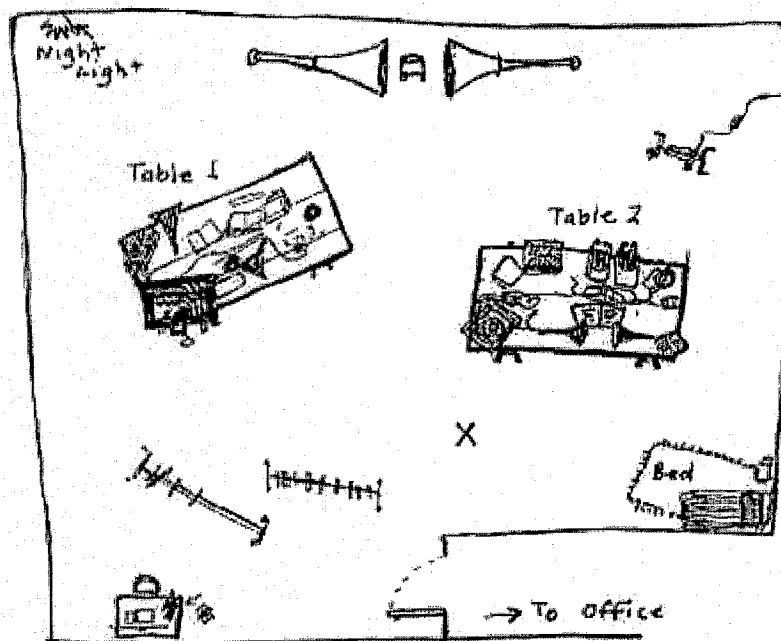


Figure 2.

Installation drawing of the Dark Pool.
Courtesy Banff website

A clothes rack displaying men's garments obstructs your view of the entire space. Immediately after entering, the sound of clanging pipes and water dripping from the makeshift water pump begins to fill the air. As you move around the clothes rack, you confront two tables constructed out of rough-hewn planks in the centre of the room. Several overhanging light bulbs illuminate the contents below (Figure 3, p. 30). On the tables, you see numerous exposed wires, speakers, diagrams, piles of open pseudo scientific and philosophical textbooks, and plates with stale bread and dried up tea bags. Approaching table two, you take turns looking inside a pair of 3D viewers attached to a stack of books, which tower over an old black typewriter (Figure 4, p.30).

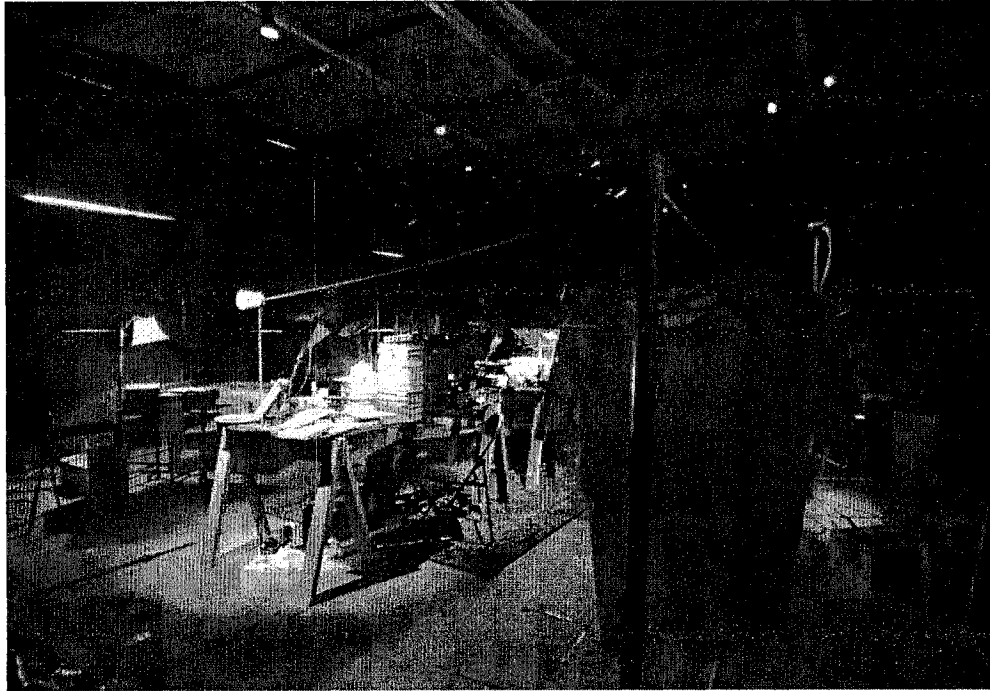


Figure 3. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1995. Multimedia installation. Installation view. Photo: Eileen Costa. Courtesy Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

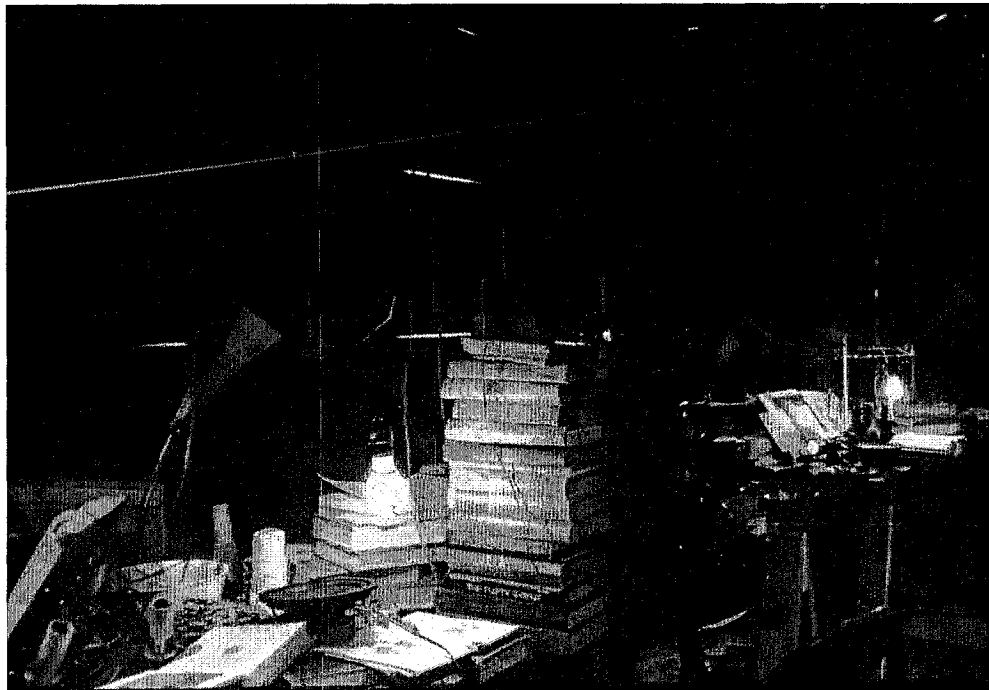


Figure 4. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1995. Multimedia installation. Installation view. Photo: Eileen Costa. Courtesy Luhring Augustine Gallery.

Inside each viewfinder, you can see an image of Allan and Tarah. In one viewfinder, Allan is in the foreground holding a cigarette. Tara is in the background, out of focus, lounging on a red leather sofa. Inside the second viewfinder, Allan and Tara are embracing in the old cathedral³. Suddenly, you hear the steady and monotonous voice of a man counting: 201, 202, 203, etc (Soundtrack #16). At the corner of this table, you find a paper cup attached to a metal rod and a piece of string, which stretches above the tables to the other end of the room. Under the paper cup, a pile of dried up orange peels sit in a plate sheltered by a book opened to a chapter on cold fusion.

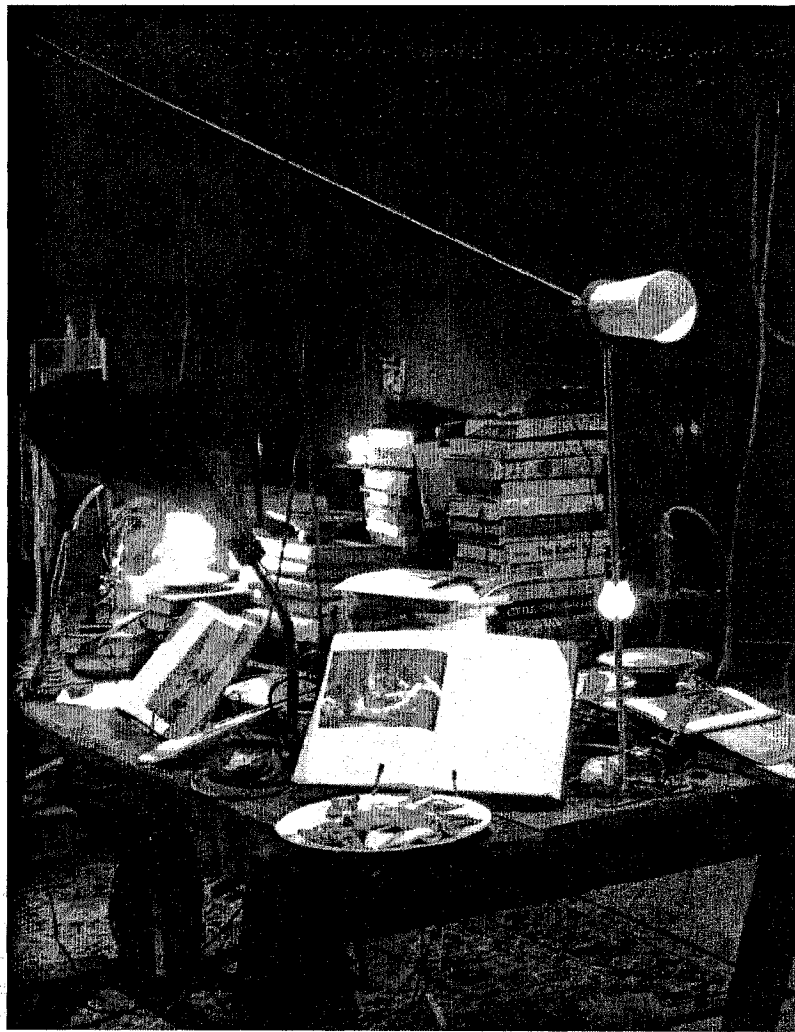


Figure 5.

Janet Cardiff
and George
Bures Miller.
*The Dark
Pool*, 1995.
Multimedia
installation.
Installation
view.
Photo:
George Bures
Miller.

³ An excerpt from the interactive version of *The Dark Pool* on the Banff Centre for the Arts website. Available: <http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/wpg/DarkPool.html>

As you walk by the cup, you hear a man urgently calling out “hello”. Behind you, you feel the looming presence of large wooden crates stacked against the wall. In the corner, an outdated short wave radio rests atop a wooden table and bears the label “New Wishing Machine”. As you approach, a pair of bird wings, resting at the edge of the table, begins to flap. Someone has scattered piles of books around the wishing machine along with a book of instructions on how to make a wish. The instructions invite you to sit in the chair and write a wish into the book along with the others. Next to the wishing machine, there is a torn red vinyl chair, a reading lamp swarming with stacks of encyclopaedias entitled: “The Book of Knowledge”. Behind the reading area, a picture of the Virgin Mary hangs in the shadows. As you look down, you wonder why pieces of cardboard and old woven rugs cover the floor. Turning your attention back to table one, you come upon two gramophone speakers that face one another (see Figure 5). When you lean in between these two speakers, you begin listening to a conversation between a man and a woman:

Mike: So, you been gone long?

Judy: No.

M: I left you a note.

J: I didn't see it.

M: We're supposed to be there in 10 minutes.

J: We won't make it. I have a headache.

M: You said you'd do it.

J: Well, I changed my mind.

M: Well, change it back, I brought the nightgown, go change in the washroom.

J: Fuck you!

M: If you don't do this nothing will happen.

J: If I don't' do this I won't disappear.

M: Did you remember to phone her?

J: Ya, ya, I did that days ago. I shouldn't have bothered.

M: What do you mean?

J: Well she probably won't come.

M: She's getting old...so, what are you thinking?

J: Nothing, give me that gown.

Next to the speakers, the head of a female mannequin reflects through the greenish, murky water of a tall glass aquarium (see Figure 5).⁴ Moving along to the next table, you come across more textbooks and another gramophone speaker. When you approach the speaker, a man's voice activates in middle sentence

... shared hallucination...Yeah tell that to some like Neuman who studied it all those years. Finally drove him crazy and he jumped into it. I toured his dusty laboratory in the Dow Corning Complex. The sleepy security guard was happy to have a visitor. He thought Neuman just slipped and they made up that story later...(Soundtrack #12).

Next to this arrangement, you stumble upon a partially-opened trunk with miniature night scene of the Dark Pool complete with tiny figures and cars.

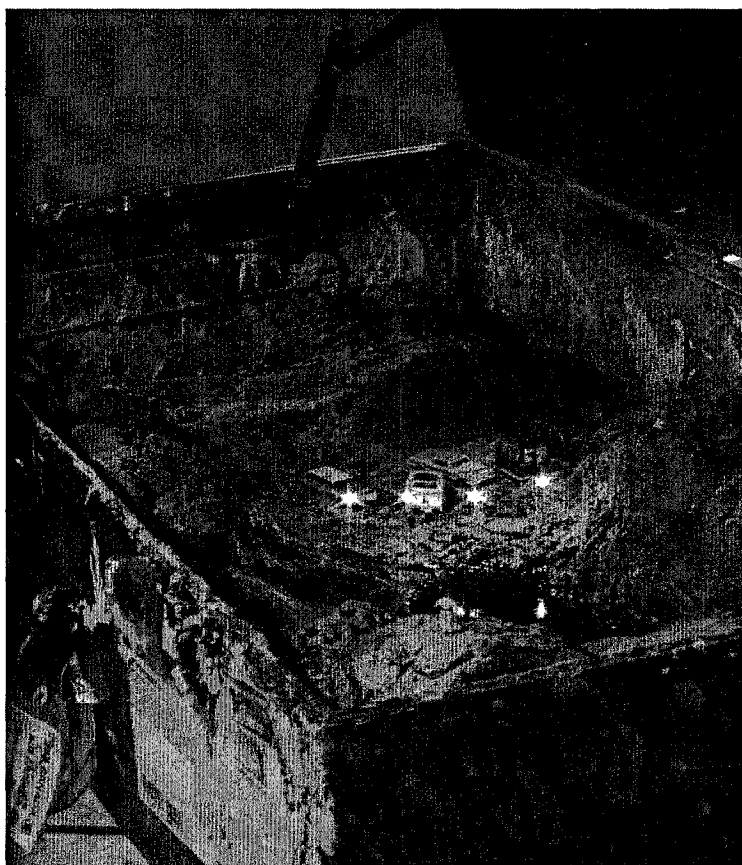


Figure 6.

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1995. Multimedia installation. Installation detail. Photo: Reece Metcalf

⁴ Artist's note: "...I had always loved playing and floating in the water but had a fear of drowning so I took lessons...and finally learned how to swim. A couple of years ago in Amsterdam I went to the torture museum (it's pretty tacky). When I saw a drowning cage for witches I was completely filled with fear. I know then that I had been in one of them before" (Cardiff, 2002).

Directly across from this diorama, there are two huge gramophone speakers on the perimeter of the room. There is a chair in between them.



Figure 7. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1996. Installation view. Mixed media. Photo courtesy Luhring Augustine Gallery.

When you sit down, a conversation begins between a male and a female voice (Miller and Cardiff) from each of the speakers:

W: (knock knock)
 M: Listen,...is there someone there?
 W: Hello, can you hear me?
 M: Yes, who is it, what do you want?
 W: It's me again. Tell me, what do you see?
 M: What do you mean?
 W: Look over to the wall
 M: Which wall?
 W: The one to your right
 M: Yea?
 W: Is there a shadow?
 M: yea, sort of
 W: What does it look like?
 M: Why, what's it matter?

W: I can't hear you
 M: Why do you want to know?
 W: Just tell me what you see
 M: There's nothing there, just a few shadows
 W: But...there was something there yesterday
 M: Like what?
 W: He said that he could see the shadows of two people dancing
 M: I don't see anything
 W: There are in front of the tables and they are waltzing around the room, her head's on his shoulder, and you can tell by the way he holds her that he loves her.
 M: That's a nice story. I'm sorry I don't see it
 W: I can't hear you are you still there? (Soundtracks #14 and 15)

You stand up from the chair and walk towards the corner of table one. On the way, you encounter another metal clothes rack displaying a woman's wardrobe. The clothes partially conceal an armoire, an unmade cot, and a night table in the corner of the room⁵. On the other side of table one, you come upon several curious arrangements.

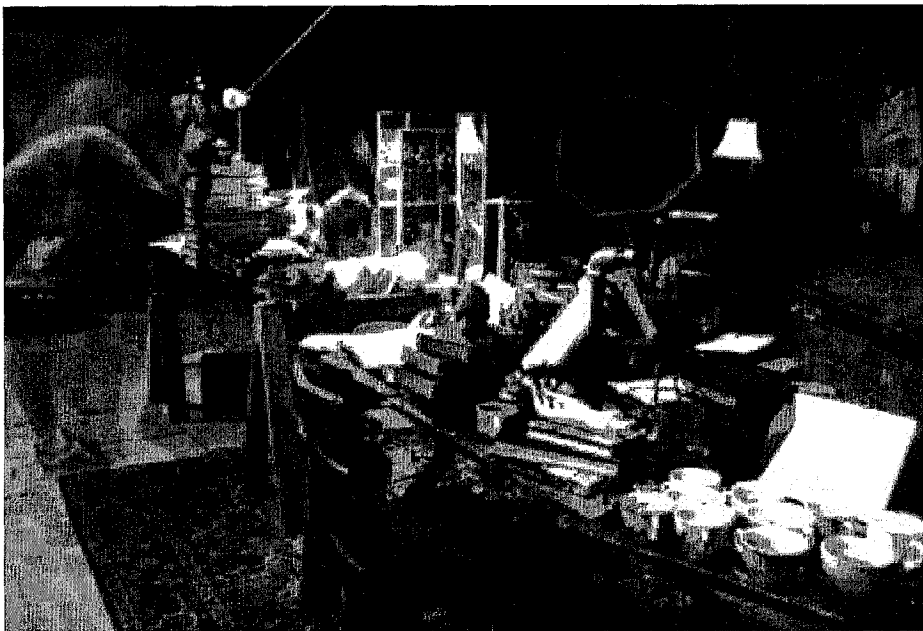


Figure 8.

Janet Cardiff
 and George
 Bures Miller.
*The Dark
 Pool*, 1995-6.
 Multimedia
 installation.
 Installation
 view. Photo
 courtesy
 Luhring
 Augustine
 Gallery.

⁵ Artist's note: "...My mother told me that every time grandma got pregnant she cried (the days before birth control and abortion). When I was young grandma lived with us, sleeping on a cot in the dining room. Every week I would wash her bent and crippled feet for her in a small washbasin and I can still remember how they felt and smelled. I miss her" (Cardiff, 2002)

At the corner of this table, you notice a tray of tea stained cups arranged on a silver tray with a book opened to a chapter on how to read tealeaves.

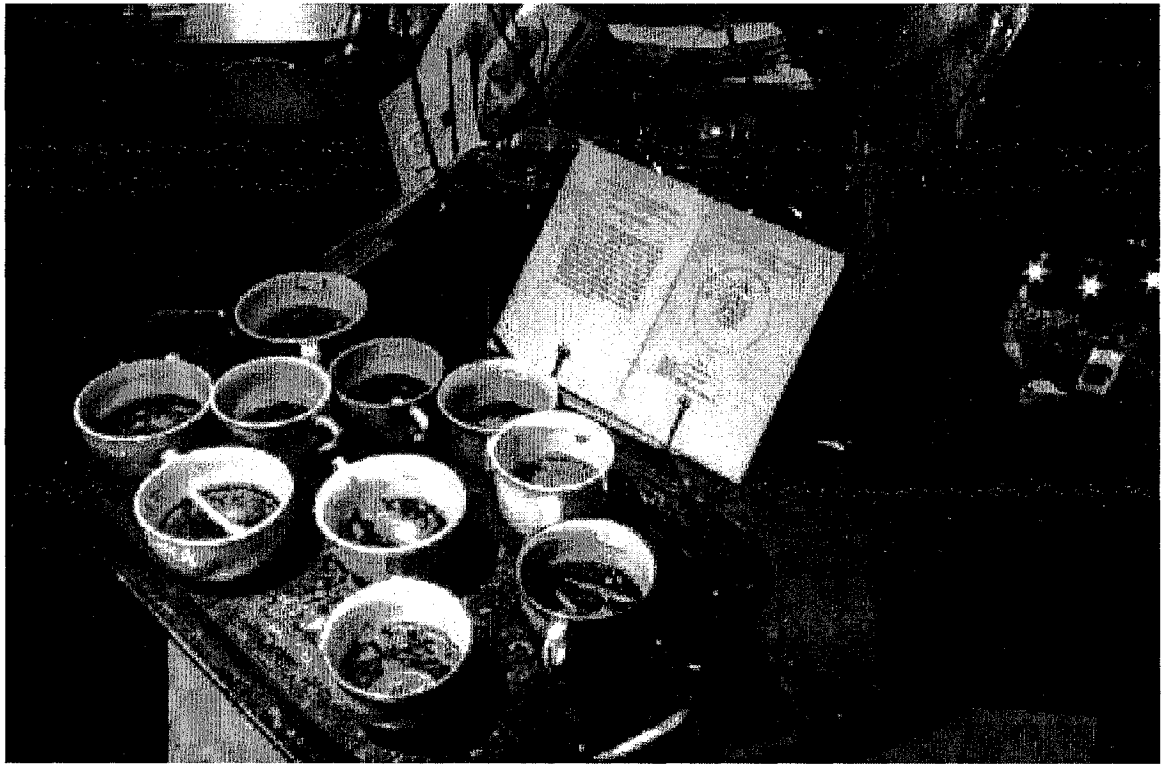


Figure 9. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1995-6. Multimedia installation. Installation view. Photo courtesy of Luhring Augustine Gallery

Quite unexpectedly, the song *Somewhere over the Rainbow* begins playing softly in the background. The sound of loud pacing footsteps interrupts the music and then stops. All you can hear now is the sound of water quietly trickling into a glass bottle from a hose attached to the water pump (see Figure 5). Amongst the clutter, you encounter more books, a mannequin's hand with electrodes attached to the fingertips, and another black gramophone speaker directly above (see Figure 8). Suddenly, the voice of an older British woman begins recalling her trip to the Dark Pool. You listen quietly but the story is difficult to understand because her voice breaks off at various intervals.

This is my account. Tarah phoned me and told me to come, [sic] told me what she was going to do. I traveled for three days in the train to get to the pool...People call it the oracle because they want to have something to believe in...(Soundtrack #3)...It's as if a piece of the puzzle fell from the sky onto my lap...(Soundtrack #5),

At the end of table one, you encounter a flashlight taped to an old black boot and more plates with stale food. Tiny figures dangle from a coat hanger and cast their shadow onto the pages of an open book and someone's journal lies open for people to read. In the background, the lamp from reading area illuminates the red vinyl chair.

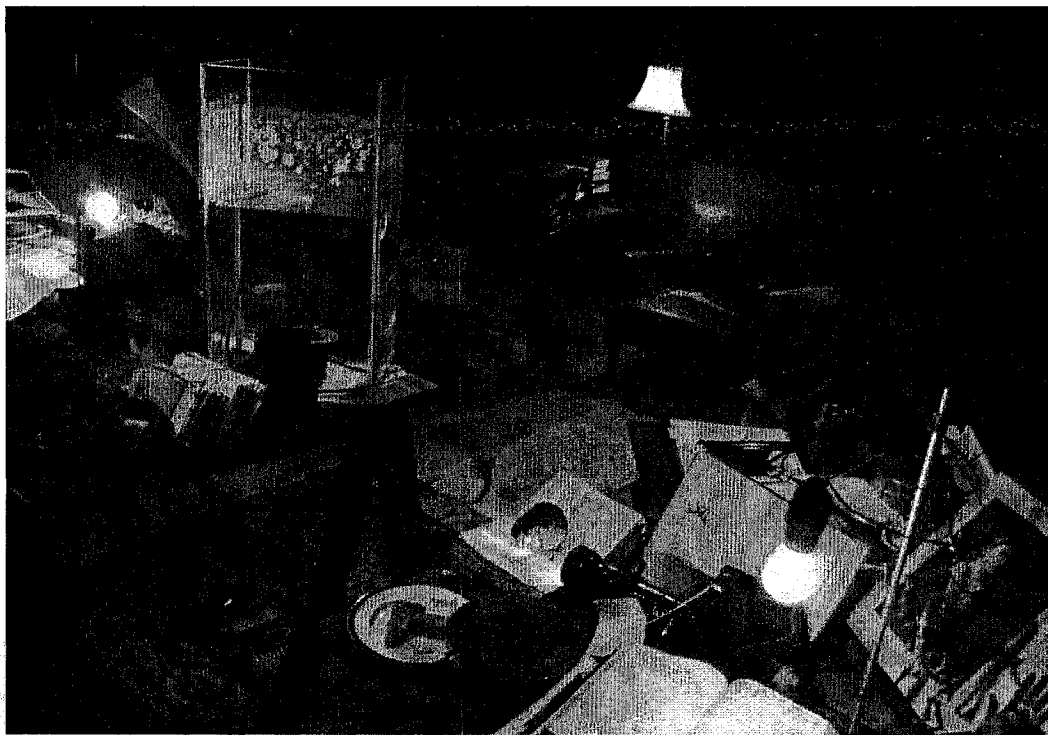


Figure 10. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. *The Dark Pool*, 1995. Multimedia installation. Installation detail. Photo: Reece Metcalf. Courtesy P.S.1

As you approach the table, you hear a young girl's voice reciting a passage about Tarah:

Janet was Tarah's older sister. When she was twenty-six she realized that she had been drowned as a witch in a previous life so she took swimming lessons and learned to float. Janet had put a spell on Tarah when she was four. That was why Tarah was the way she was (Soundtrack #7).

If you listen carefully, you can also hear the young girl describing this mysterious pool of water, and the disappearance that took place. Once again, the narrative is difficult to decipher.

The pool was 40 feet in diameter.... After a while [*sic*] people stopped trying to get to the middle of the pool. Instead [*sic*] they started putting objects of devotion into it...She had taken one step into the pool and disappeared, never to be seen again. They though she had committed suicide...The woman called Tarah who drowned herself in the pool...comes up at night to breathe (Soundtrack #4)...The structure took six months to build...His fingers entered the black oil of the pool. When he bounced back, his fingers were gone. There is a stand at the pool now that sells fake fingers as the legend of Allan and Tarah grows. There is also a scientific book about it sold there, but it is difficult to read (Soundtrack #2).

3.3 Critics and Commentaries

Delving into *The Dark Pool* is like immersing oneself in an environment that has been deserted by its owners - a place where time and memory are suspended, where the lifelong search for knowledge has mysteriously halted, leaving behind a sense of absence and loss (Crowston, 2002). Viewers activate disjointed and incomplete narratives, which contribute to the works examination between fact and fiction (Crowston, 2002).

Although, Cardiff and Miller rely heavily on motion sensors and audio playbacks (as seen through the exposed wiring and speakers throughout the work), the objects within the room are outmoded and obsolete, deflecting the viewer's awareness of the technology (D'Souza, p. 161).

Like much of Cardiff's work, *The Dark Pool* requires a sustained commitment on the part of its viewers. "Only slowly, as you explore the idiosyncrasies of this cluttered room, do the contours of the disjointed narrative emerge" (D'Souza, 2000, p. 161). To actively participate within this installation, viewers must place themselves in the centre of

something “menacing”, “threatening”, and face a certain degree of “powerlessness” (D’Souza, p. 161). The participant’s degree of control and power over the installation remains ambiguous as the intimacy of listening becomes authoritative. One critic recounts the experience of a viewer who wished for an “art experience that would provide a distinct sense of closure”, perhaps in an attempt to create a more “substantial authorial control” over the work (Williams, 1998, p. 67). Museum visitors depend on the narratives to steer them through the installation – even reassure them. Yet, the information they receive remains fragmented, and so, the participants must become autonomous and sort through the clutter and confusion on their own. According to Garneau (1997), *The Dark Pool* is “designed by its authors to be seen by a sympathetic viewer – an ideal participant who risks privacy to become complicit in another’s narrative” (p. 93). Participants surrender their privacy – their solitude and personal space to share the experience with others. Together, participants take their turn trespassing into somebody’s abandoned room to search among their personal effects and eavesdrop on the private conversations and memories echoing through the space. Redren (2002) describes the hesitation viewers’ feel when they open the door to *The Dark Pool* by recalling her own experience:

When I was in the room [sic] a couple of people entered, saw me, apologized, and quickly left. Perhaps they thought they had stumbled into the odd workspace of some eccentric museum employee. Their reaction is a good reflection of how all of these works affect us as viewers. They make us unsure of our perceptions. We are forced to both question and alter our passive visual and aural consumption habits (p. 52).

Sound guides willing participants through a decadent assortment of objects and challenges how they search for coherence and meaning. Like many of Cardiff’s

installations, *The Dark Pool* requires participants to delve into an environment designed to disrupt the boundaries between the public and private spaces one commonly associates with the art viewing experience within the museum setting. The next chapter outlines the video based method I use to document how three different participants behave and respond within such an environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Method

As in my previous pilot project, I used video to capture observable movements within the space of the installation, and documented how participants constructed and communicated the meaning of the work through their verbal responses. The method is based on Lachapelle's (1999) Informant-Made Videos (IMV), aimed at documenting viewer responses towards different artworks using hand held camcorders. In Lachapelle's (1999) study, informants had to choose an unfamiliar work of art they were drawn to, and spend five minutes viewing the work. Then using a camcorder, informants were asked to re-trace the steps through which they became acquainted with the artwork, "thus re-creating the process used to view, contemplate, and understand that particular work of art" (Lachapelle, 1999, p. 246). Lachapelle's objective was to allow the informants to explore their full potential at responding to works of art and arrive at a better understanding of what the artwork was about by using their own thoughts, feelings, and interpretations during their art viewing experience (p. 246). Lachapelle found many advantages to collecting visual and verbal data in this manner. Informant Made Video's reduced interference from the researcher, provided visual documentation of the work, allowed for in-camera editing accompanied by verbal commentary, documented physical interaction, and provided informants with a self-reflective awareness of their own viewing experiences (p. 243). In my previous study, this particular research approach was especially useful in observing how participants moved within the work, and in

examining where they had failed to acknowledge certain expectations of the physical environment (Krstich, 2000).

Participants

This research study involved three adult participants: an expert, and two non-experts – one of whom I considered an occasional museum visitor. In his study, Lachapelle (1999) defined an expert as someone who has professional training and/or education in visual arts, and a non-expert as a person who has university training in any other degree except for fine arts (Lachapelle, p.245). Following Hood (as cited in Falk & Dierkling, 1992), I defined the “occasional museum visitor”⁶ as an individual who is inclined to visit museums once or twice per year (Falk & Dierkling p. 17). By using these kinds of participants, I examined how they behaved and how they constructed their interpretations. More importantly, it allowed me to further investigate whether or not background knowledge and/or formal education in fine arts was more important than their own bodily experience in the interpretation of the work.

Equipment

The equipment for this research study consisted of a Canon V-8 camcorder, and an audiocassette recorder for the follow-up interview.

Field Site

The location of this research project was conducted at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, in Montréal, Québec. I chose this site because of its summer long retrospective on Janet Cardiff. The subject of this video study was a collaborative

⁶ The frequency of museum visits is being considered as the main criteria for defining this participant over the specific leisure-based characteristics outlined by Hood in a study conducted at the Toledo Art Museum.

multimedia installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, entitled *The Dark Pool* (originally installed in 1995).

4.2 Procedure

I began by asking selected participants to take part in a video-based research study, which would document their art viewing experience with an installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller entitled: *The Dark Pool*. The research study involved three segments for each participant. The first phase consisted of an initial interview. During the second stage, two video segments were produced. In the first video, I documented each participant's interaction with work. In the following segment, participants produced a videotaped account of their own interaction with the work and provided verbal interpretation. The final research stage comprised of a follow-up interview that incorporated a viewing of the video data. I asked the participants to spend a couple of hours on each portion of the project over the course of three (consecutive) days. The actual goal of this research study (to document how bodily experience within the installation space aids or confounds the interpretation of meaning) was withheld from the participants. This was necessary because influencing their expectations about how to behave once inside the space could have affected the overall results of the data.

The first stage involved an initial interview with each participant to determine his/her educational background, level of involvement and/or knowledge of fine arts, museums and/or galleries, and contemporary art practice. In addition, I ascertained whether s/he was familiar with the artist and/or installation used for this study, and his or her knowledge of video equipment. Next, I outlined the ethical procedures and considerations outlined in the consent forms and each participant signed (Appendix B).

On the second day, the participants viewed and interacted with the installation for as long they wished to remain with the work. I allowed the participants to reflect on their experience for approximately five minutes. Afterwards, I demonstrated basic camera procedures and techniques to the participants such as how to turn the camcorder on and off, how to zoom in and out, pause, and record. I also addressed any problems, questions, and/or concerns. Following Lachapelle's (1999) approach, I gave the participants a hand held camcorder, and asked them to re-trace their passage and experience with the work, and offer their own insights, feelings, emotions, interpretations about the installation and its possible meaning(s). I reminded the participants that they could spend as much time as they wanted in documenting their experience and interpreting the work.

In the final stage, the research participants engaged in a follow-up interview based on the results of the first video segments (documenting their initial interaction with the installation). Allowing the participants to view the video research helped to provide visual support to interview questions, which I used to obtain additional information about the nature of their bodily experience in detail, especially regarding possible inhibiting factors that might have prevented their interaction with the work.

4.3 Modifications

In the pilot project, my method differed somewhat from that of Lachapelle (1999), and I repeated these changes in this study. For instance, in Lachapelle's study participants were not videotaped during their first encounter with the work. For my study, I wanted to capture their initial experience with the installation. This means that the first encounter each participant had with the installation was instrumental in documenting immediate and spontaneous movements and responses to the installation.

Furthermore, I did not set any specific time limit for viewing the works in both video segments. This alteration was useful in determining how much time was devoted to specific parts of the installation, how much time was spent with the work during the initial viewing segment and the subsequent segment documenting their verbal responses. Eliminating the time limit in both video segments was helpful in determining how much time each participant needed during the art viewing and interpretive process, and whether or not that time was spent constructively or in confusion about the work.

I made some additional modifications to the procedure and the data analysis for this study. In the pilot study, one expert and non-expert were expected to view and respond to two different installations in a specific order. For this study, I examined the data produced by three participants: a non-expert, an occasional museum visitor (also a non-expert), and an expert with fine art training. For this project, these three participants responded to only one installation. In addition to this, participants had the opportunity to view their videotaped segments in conjunction with their follow-up interview, instead of answering questions based on what they remembered about their experience as they did in the pilot project. I altered these interview questions to directly address what was occurring on the videotapes.

4.4 Data Analysis

When the video research was complete, I had two videotapes, one observing the participants first experience with the work, and one documenting their verbal commentaries as they retraced their passage through the work. I treated the first video according to movement and time by examining how the participants behaved and oriented themselves within the installation and the amount of time they spent with the

work. For the second video, I examined the narrated verbal interpretations in addition to time and movement. I provided a comparative analysis for each participant's responses. By studying the movement of the participants in both tapes, I was able to examine how the participants navigated through the space of the work, and how or if they interacted with objects and/or specific areas of the installation. The amount of time they spent with the installation helped to examine what aspects of the work yielded more focus - why they devoted a particular amount of time to the work in general. Next, the narrated segment of the videotape revealed the kinds of interpretations the participants generated about the meaning of the work, and how that coincided with their bodily experience. Finally, the follow-up interview helped me to gain a better understanding of why and how participant inhibitions and/or expectations of the physical space affected their interaction and behaviour within the installation.

In the following chapter, I describe the participants in detail and then provide an account of their initial experience within the museum and their encounter with the installation in both video segments. I have categorized the data according to movement, time, and narrated commentary during the second video segment, followed by the verbal responses recorded during their follow-up interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DATA

5.1 Participants

In this study, I used three adult participants: one expert, an occasional museum visitor (also a non-expert), and a non-expert. I selected each of these participants based on their different levels of experience and exposure to art, and specifically because of their previous knowledge and/or encounters with installation art. By using three different participants in this study, I was able to examine viewer responses ranging from: 1) a lack of knowledge and/or interest in art; 2) self initiated artistic curiosity in which museum and/or gallery experiences are consciously sought after; and 3) those stemming from previous artistic training and education in the fine arts.

Before I began each initial interview, I outlined the procedure and told the participants that they would be videotaped encountering the installation, and then they would have to produce their own videotaped account of their experience. I also informed them that a security guard would be present inside the installation. At this point, I would also like to mention that the curator in charge of the show gave instructions to the guard to make sure nobody else could enter the work while the research was underway. I started the initial interviews by informing the participants that they would be participating in a video-based research study attempting to document viewer responses towards installation art, and that they were classified as either expert or non-expert. In all three interviews, I asked the participants about their educational background and/or formal training, their exposure to art (if at all), and whether or not they considered themselves *museum-goers*. I also asked them if they ever visited the Musée d'art contemporain de

Montréal. In addition to this, I wanted to know whether they were familiar with *The Dark Pool* and/or Cardiff's retrospective. All three participants confirmed that they were not familiar with the work of Cardiff and Miller, nor had they seen the exhibition. At this point in the interview, I also asked the participants if they knew about installation art. I concluded by reiterating that this was a video-based research study, and I inquired about their level of proficiency with video equipment. The content of each interview differed slightly (in my attempts to focus) on their distinguishing characteristics as research participants, and their level of artistic expertise.

For the purposes of this study, I will refer to the non-expert participant as Mona, the museum visitor as Sasha, and the expert as Emile. In doing so, I present the findings of the research study in this order.

a. Non-Expert Participant: MONA:

Mona is a university student currently enrolled in a major Canadian university. During the course of the interview, her responses to my questions were very brief and straightforward. Mona does not consider herself a *museum-goer*, and the only time she actually did visit museums was when she was a (very young) child. She admitted that she has had a minimal exposure to art in general. As a result, she has never frequented the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, nor is she familiar with installation art. Similarly, she had "zero" experience with video equipment.

I selected Mona for this study because I felt that her interest and exposure to art was minimal along with her motivation to seek out art viewing experiences. Therefore, Mona was the ideal non-expert for this study. Her participation allowed me to document her behaviour, reactions, and responses towards her surroundings after a prolonged

absence from the museum environment. It also permitted me to document how she acquainted herself with contemporary installation art despite her lack of knowledge and exposure to this particular form of art.

b. Non-Expert Participant and Occasional Museum Visitor: SASHA:

Sasha is a recent university graduate. During the interview, he produced very eloquent descriptions and well thought out responses to my questions. I chose Sasha to participate in this study for two reasons. First, he is a non-expert in the fine arts much like Mona. In other words, he does not have any formal training or education in the fine arts, nor does he have any previous experience or knowledge of installation art. Second, he frequents museums on an occasional basis, and this sets him apart from Mona. Therefore, his participation in the study allowed me to investigate how a self-initiated *museum-goer* orients himself within the museum environment and inside the installation itself. I wanted to examine how his occasional exposure to art in the museum environment would function with contemporary installation art. In doing so, I was able to study the kinds of responses and interpretations he generated about the installation - how and why they unfolded.

In my methodology, I cite Hood's (as cited in Falk & Dierkling, 1992) definition of "occasional visitor" as someone who visits museums once or twice per year (Falk & Dierkling, 1992, p. 17). By defining Sasha in this manner, I also point out that I am only considering the frequency of visits as a determining factor. Even though Sasha visits museums and/or galleries twice a year and tends to go on the weekends, some of his reasons from attending museums are different from the motivating factors Hood (1992) proposes as characteristic of "occasional" visitors. For example, Hood (1992) claims that

“occasional” museum visitors have more in common with people who do not chose to visit museums than with more enthusiastic “frequent museum-goers” because they value the same leisurely activities: “being with people, participating actively, and feeling at ease in their surroundings” (Falk & Dierkling, p. 18). Furthermore, people who do not frequent museums tend to think of these places as restrictive and uncomfortable, and they do not regard the educational component of museum experiences as enjoyable (p. 18).

“Frequent museum-goers” on the other hand, value learning opportunities and perceive them as fun. They also enjoy the challenge of new experiences and the feeling that they are doing something worthwhile by opting to spend their time and money in a museum (Falk & Dierkling, 1992, p. 17). People in this group also report that visiting museums during their travels is a high priority, and that they are just as likely to visit the museum alone as with another person (p. 17). According to Hood (1992), the characteristics of this particular population are similar to those that Gundykunst’s categorizes under the “cultural or intellectual” group in his study of how people decide to spend their leisure time (p. 17). Sasha’s reasons overlap with those described by “frequent museum-goers” more readily than those reported by people who did not chose to spend their leisure time in these types of institutions. Although Sasha confirmed that, he never visited the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, he did reveal that he frequented other museums in Montreal such as The McCord, as well as galleries and museums in Toronto, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario and The Royal Ontario Museum. Aside from national institutions, he has also visited The Guggenheim, The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as The Prado Museum in Spain. Sasha enjoys visiting these kinds of institutions on his travels because the works of art cannot not be

seen anywhere else but in that city or location. Sasha considers “original” works of art intriguing because they bridge the historical gap between the viewer and the work of art. In that regard, the anticipation of the primary object motivates him to encounter actual works of art. Sasha refers to himself as a “cultured individual” who takes pleasure in exploring the cultural aspect of museum experiences to which there is an educational component. He also delights in visiting museums and/or galleries because he enjoys the “adventure” or “surprise factor” involved when visiting a museum for the first time. Sasha also admits that he finds it unappealing to visit the same place repeatedly. He affirms that his experience within the museum environment has been positive because of the feeling of anticipation in discovering what was “behind every corner”. However, the experience can also be negative because of the “pretentious” people who pretend to be “down with the scene”. According to Sasha, “nobody wants to look like they’re an idiot...it’s fairly intellectual...you can’t look stupid.”

Although Sasha has no theoretical knowledge or experience with fine art, he consciously seeks out museum experiences and is therefore, more engaged with the process of looking at or encountering works of art within the museum setting. His motivation to seek out art viewing experiences and exposure to the museum environment sets him apart from Mona.

c. Expert Participant: EMILE:

Emile is an upbeat woman artist. She was very relaxed during our first interview together. I selected her as my expert participant because of her background knowledge and university degree in Fine Arts. While this study was being conducted, she was in the process of completing her Master of Arts in Art Education. During the interview, Emile

confessed that she did not visit museums or galleries as often as she should, and she usually visited these places when she was on vacation. Emile also stated that she had visited the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in the past, and although she had heard about the Janet Cardiff retrospective on exhibit at this museum, she was not familiar with the artist's work. When I asked her if she knew the term Installation Art, she demonstrated a general understanding of the practice as one which turns "a room into a work of art" and described the three dimensional room-size drawings of Judy Pfaff as an example. At this point, I would like to mention that her *expert* knowledge in art does not encompass an in depth critical or theoretical understanding of installation art practice and is not being regarded in that manner. In other words, she is not an expert on installation art.

While conducting this video-based study, I wanted to examine how instrumental her theoretical artistic knowledge was in constructing interpretations and experiencing the installation. By using an expert participant I was able to investigate whether or not she relied on her fine arts education to help her understand the work over her own bodily responses during her encounter with the installation. I was also able to study the extent of her knowledge of installation, how and if that helped her generate interpretations about the work.

5.2 Research Data

In the second stage of this research study, I accompanied each participant to the museum. Together, we produced two videotaped accounts of their experience with *The Dark Pool* installation using Lachapelle's method. In the first video segment, I entered the installation along with the participant and videotaped his/her first encounter with the

work. The second video segment was produced by the participant, which recorded his/her verbal commentary (insights, emotions, interpretations etc.) about the work. I did not impose any time restrictions for viewing the work in both cases. The third phase consisted of an audio taped interview with the participants after they had an opportunity to view the results of the first video segment (that documented their behaviour within the installation). At the end of the study, I had two video tapes: one documenting their behaviour and duration of their initial viewing and one consisting of each participant's verbal interpretations about the work during his/her second encounter. I also had three follow-up interviews recorded on audiotape. The data for this study was treated according to three criteria: time, movement, and narrated commentary. For the first video segment, I described each participant's movement (behaviour and orientation) and time. In the second segment, I explained each participant's verbal commentary about his or her experience and how this coincided with time and movement in the second videotape. The follow-up interview helped to illuminate the inhibiting factors captured in the first segment as well as areas of the work, which the participants did not address during their verbal commentaries.

In the following section, I provide a detailed account of each participant's experience inside the museum as well as each participant's reaction to the museum surroundings. These descriptions further clarify some of the defining characteristics I documented during the initial interviews.

a. MONA:

Mona and I arrived at the museum early in the morning - an hour before the museum opened its doors to the public - in order to avoid any possible intrusions caused

by other visitors. This was my first visit to the museum to conduct research, and I wanted to do this in a controlled environment (without any intrusion). The entire museum atmosphere was very still and quiet. I instructed Mona to wait near the entrance of the exhibition so that I could confirm the cooperation of the museum attendants who were guarding the corridor, and the cooperation of security guard who was stationed inside the installation itself. I wanted to ensure that we would not be interrupted while the research was in progress. I informed Mona that a security guard would be present inside the actual work and she appeared very surprised and reluctant. At this point, I reiterated that she could decide not to participate in this study if she felt any discomfort and she assured me that she would be fine.

b. SASHA:

The museum was bustling with activity when Sasha and I arrived on a hot July afternoon. Visitors of different ages crowded the museum corridors filling the air with the echoing and thundering sounds of their footsteps and voices. There were groups of young school children passing through, tours of the exhibit in progress, and people lined up to experience each installation. Sasha did not seem to mind all the clutter while he waited patiently on a bench outside the installation. He was very casual and relaxed as he familiarized himself with the video camera. His experience was quite different from Mona's because he was exposed to the museum environment during one of its peak hours. Sasha also had the opportunity to see people coming in and out of the installation, as well as the security guard who held the door open for him as he entered the work.

c. EMILE:

Emile and I arrived at the museum just before noon, it was quiet, and few visitors were in the corridors. Emile was very relaxed and excited to experience the installation. Much like Sasha, Emile already knew where the installation was because when we arrived, the security guard had just exited the work and was standing in front of the door waiting for us to begin. I instructed her to wait in the corridor outside the installation while I informed the security guard of my project and asked for his cooperation.

5.3 Movement:

By examining the participants' movements within the installation space, I was able to study how they oriented themselves and navigated their passage through the work. This permitted me to describe the kinds of interaction that took place by studying their body language, behaviour, and possible inhibitions in the first segment and how this contributed to their interpretation of the work in the second segment.

a. MONA:

When Mona was introduced to the entrance of the installation, she did not open the door right away. Instead, she walked over to the didactic panel and asked if she was supposed to open the door. After entering, she walked directly towards the centre of the room, turned around to ask me what she should do. At this point, Mona decided to walk around the two centre tables beginning with table two. As Mona walked around the tables, she looked at the objects displayed in front of her, but she did not pay any attention to the other areas located around the perimeter. Mona was startled by the sounds, but she continued looking at the objects displayed on the table. She acknowledged the presence of the guard by looking in his direction and smiling before

hurrying past him. After this occurred, she walked over to the bedroom area and informed me that she was finished viewing the work.

The video footage captured her viewing the different parts of the work with her arms folded across her chest and her body in an upright position. Mona kept a considerable distance between herself and the centre tables. When she did pause to inspect something more closely, she bent her head slightly and maintained her distance. Although she maintained a steady pace as she moved around the table, there were a few moments where her head lifted up when she heard the sound of the clanging pipes and the young girl's voice. When she paused to look at the teacups at the corner of table one, she turned her head back to the bedroom section when she heard the music to *Somewhere over the Rainbow*, and then kept going. As Mona moved around the table, she briefly looked at the suitcase with the diorama inside and then continued along the length of the table. At this point, she looked at the security guard and smiled. Mona sped up her pace as she passed the guard. The faint voice calling "hello" can be heard through the paper cup at corner of the table two, she turned slightly but continued across the room towards the bedroom section. She paused in front of the night table at this section shortly, and then signalled to me that she was finished.

b. SASHA:

Sasha's path through the installation was much more complex and varied than Mona's. Throughout the first video segment documenting his initial encounter with the work, he was captured moving back and forth between the centre tables in the middle of the room, and the objects and ready-mades located around the perimeter. Upon entering the work, he paused and began looking at the objects in his immediate surroundings

before proceeding towards table one. He focused his attention on the viewfinders and then moved around the corner of table two, where the paper cup was located. Sasha remained close to this table, but he began pivoting and turning his body to look at the wishing machine and reading area located in the corner. He gazed at the wooden crates before actually moving towards the wishing machine and reading area. After returning to table two to listen to the conversation emitted through the smaller gramophone speakers, he went back to the reading area and stopped. Sasha moved back to table two, walked towards the diorama of the Dark Pool on table one, and peered inside. When he turned around to stand in front of the huge gramophone speakers, he was instructed to sit down by the guard. When the conversation was finished, Sasha got up from the chair, and then paused once again. He walked over to the corner where the bedroom area was located, and then towards the water pump before returning to table one. After listening to the stories and descriptions about the Dark Pool in this section, Sasha turned around and went back to the open crate, then he moved towards the clothes rack, and then he returned to the open crate. Sasha paused and then walked towards table two to look through the viewfinders once again. He passed right through the middle of both tables quite suddenly in order to inspect the image hanging over the chair in the reading area on the other side of the room. From the section, he walked towards the wish machine and then towards wooden crates once again. The video footage captured Sasha moving back and forth between the crates and the paper cup (on table two) a few times before he signalled to leave.

During his first encounter, Sasha maintained a close distance between himself and the objects in the work for the most part. At times, he could be seen pressing his body

right up to the edge of the tables. Sasha inspected particular items more closely by bending his body forward to lean in. In some cases, this allowed him to interact with parts of the work. For example, Sasha did not hesitate to look through the viewfinders soon after he entered the work. The video footage also documented him stopping to listen to the voices emitted from various speakers by bending or tilting his head towards the sounds. This was particularly evident in his experience with the paper cup where he placed his ear into the empty cup and even turned his mouth towards the cup as if to answer the voice calling out. At one point in the video, he curiously passed his hand over a few objects on the table after tilting his head to listen to the voice of the man counting. On another occasion, he leaned in extremely close in order to smell the dried orange peels at the corner of the table. Although he kept his arms at his sides most of the time, the video footage captured him flipping up the cover of one of the books and gripping the edge of the table itself as he continued to examine the objects in front of him. However, there were a few moments where Sasha kept a distance between himself and the objects in the work. When he visited the wishing machine section, he stood behind the chair and leaned his weight forward on the back of it so he could view the machine. However, he did not attempt to sit in the chair or write a wish regardless of the instructions on how to use the machine resting on the table. On another occasion, he stood in front of the two gramophone speakers with the chair in the middle, and he did not move until the security guard told him to sit down. While Sasha was listening to the dialogue, he kept his hands tucked under his thighs. The video footage also recorded some awkward moments in Sasha's behaviour during the first segment. Sasha was seen shuffling his feet on the floor, scratching his head, and turning around back and forth, which seemed to indicate

that he was unsure about where to go. When a particular sound startled him, he widened his eyes and sometimes his head jolted up in an attempt to locate the sound's origin. I would like to mention that the sound of the door creaking opening and closing was not part of the work but rather people trying to enter the work and being sent away by the security guard. Aside from sitting down when the security guard instructed him to do so, Sasha did not pay any attention to him throughout the first segment.

c. EMILE:

The video footage of Emile's first experience with *The Dark Pool* captured her almost systematic method for exploring the different areas of the work. Emile began by moving along the perimeter of the room and stopped briefly at each section. Then she walked around the tables three times before re-examining the objects located around the edge of the room. She began by briefly examining the open crate located directly in front of her before moving towards the water pump and the bedroom area. The video footage in the first segment documented her as she looked up to the ceiling before walking towards the gramophone section, followed by the reading area, the wishing machine in the corner, and finally the stack of wooden crates opposite table one. When she finished, she turned towards the corner of table two, where the paper cup was located, and she moved from section to section looking at the various objects displayed on both tables. Emile walked around the two centre tables two more times. She bent down twice to look underneath the tables and then passed in between the two tables and returned to the sections around the edges of the room such as the reading area, the wishing machine, and wooden crates. Emile looked at the men's clothes located next to the wooden crates, and then she advanced towards the other side of the room to inspect the women's clothes

situated next to the bedroom area. She walked towards the large black gramophones and was uncertain about sitting down until the security guard confirmed that it was okay. Emile listened to the conversation twice before getting up to examine the women's clothes and the bedroom area once more. After a moment of brief hesitation, she walked back to the other end of the room towards the wishing machine and bent down to the floor. She disappeared from the frame and only reappeared across the room next to the men's clothes rack. Soon after this occurred, Emile turned towards me, looked at the open crate once more, and then exited the room.

Emile did not touch or interact with anything around the perimeter of the room until the security guard assured her that she could. This moment was most evident in her experience with the gramophone speakers. Much like Sasha, Emile was also reluctant to sit in the chair positioned in between the two speakers. The only difference between the two participants was that Emile was more proactive in her attempt to interact with that area because she asked the security guard if sitting on the chair was permissible. While Emile was listening to the conversation between the man and the woman, she kept her hands folded in her lap and her head tilted on one side. Emile smiled as she listened to the voices and actually looked up when the voice said: "look over to the wall". She listened to the conversation once more before moving to inspect another area. Despite the reassurance that she could actively participate with the gramophone area, it is interesting to note that Emile did not physically interact with other sections like the wishing machine and reading area, which also had chairs on which viewers could sit (and in the case of the wishing machine where there were operating instructions for participants to follow). On one occasion, however, the video footage captured Emile as

she lightly grazed her fingers across the women's clothes hanging on the rack and then pushed them aside. For the most part, Emile maintained a close proximity between herself and the work. When she wanted to examine the object or details more carefully, she bent at the waist and leaned in very close, but kept her hands on her thighs or behind her back. At certain moments, her physical proximity to the work helped her discover interactive elements within the work. This behaviour was evident during her encounter with viewfinders and the diorama. Emile took the initiative to peer into these objects, and to inspect them more closely. Her experience with the various auditory components placed amongst the various objects on the tables also illustrated this point. For instance, upon hearing the faint voice calling out "hello" from the paper cup, Emile stopped and turned towards the cup, placed her ear very close to them rim in order to hear, and then turned her head towards the cup and placed her mouth close to the rim two times (as if to respond). She attempted to interact with this object two more times during the first video segment. Emile also stopped to listen to the speaker near the teacups on table one that described the secrets of the Dark Pool, and the two smaller gramophone speakers on table two through which one could hear the angry conversation between a man and a woman about a nightgown. When Emile encountered these areas, she bent forward or slanted her head to hear what the voices were saying. On certain occasions, Emile crouched down to discover or inspect what was underneath the two centre tables and the wishing machine. There were also moments when she stopped moving and only moved her head back and forth to survey the area before moving along to the next section. The video footage also documented her as she pressed both hands against the sides of her face as she moved around the centre tables.

5.4 Time:

The amount of time each participant spent with the work allowed me to investigate how much time the participants devoted to the installation as a whole, in addition to the specific parts of the work. Table 1 charts the total amount of time spent with the installation as a whole in both video segments. Table 2 illustrates the amount of time the participants spent with specific parts of the work in their initial viewing and during their verbal interpretation exercise in the second video segment. This chart also reflects the number of times that each participant engaged with a specific section of the work⁷. I have also included a section labelled **Orientation time, which helped me to account for moments where the participants appeared to be static and/or uncertain about where they were going to move next. I repeated the same criteria for the second video segment in Table 3, which charts each participant's experience during his/her verbal commentaries. The **Orientation time for the second video segment describes moments where the participants did not focus the camera on particular section but provided commentary anyway, or when they videotaped parts of the work that do not appear in Table 1 (i.e. floor, ceiling, wall). I will begin by discussing the amount of time the participants spent during their first encounter with *The Dark Pool* installation.

a. MONA:

Mona spent a total of 2 minutes and 14 seconds engaging with the work in the first section (see Table 1). According to Table 2, Mona only concentrated on three sections of the work: the door to the installation, the centre tables, and the bedroom

⁷ The door, open crate, and wooden crates are not included as sections in the original installation plan (see Figure 2, p. 29). I have included them as sections in the table because the participants visited and/or responded to them in the study.

Table 1

Total Amount of Time Spent in Both Video Segments

	Participants		
	Mona	Sasha	Emile
First Video	2:14 min	18:53 min	15:53 min
Second Video	--	33:36 min	20:13 min

Note. Dashes indicate that the participant did not complete the second video segment.

Table 2

Time Spent with Each Section during the First Video Segment

Section	Participants					
	Mona		Sasha		Emile	
	Total	No.	Total	No.	Total	No.
Door	20 sec	1	5 sec	1	15 sec	1
Centre Tables	1:29 min	1	9:53min	7	7:53 sec	3
Men's Clothes	--	--	14 sec	1	10 sec	2
Woman's Clothes	--	--	--	--	13 sec	1
Water Pump	--	--	26 sec	1	7 sec	1
Open Crate	--	--	12 sec	2	13 sec	2
Wooden Crates	--	--	43 sec	5	19 sec	2
Wishing Machine	--	--	1:08 min	2	36 sec	3
Reading Area	--	--	22 sec	3	38 sec	3
Gramophones	--	--	1: 25 min	1	2:50 min	2
Bedroom	7 sec	1	50 sec	1	18 sec	2
**Orientation	18 sec	1	1:45 min	9	28 sec	5

Note. This chart indicates the amount of time spent with each section as well as the number of times that each participant visited a specific section of the work. Min = minutes; Sec = Seconds; Total= time spent; No. = Frequency of visits.

Dashes represent the areas participants did not visit.

**Orientation = accounts for periods of time that could not be adequately categorized because the participant appeared to be static and/or uncertain about where he or she was going to move next.

Table 3

Time Spent with Each Section during the Second Video Segment

Section	Participants					
	Mona		Sasha		Emile	
	Total	No.	Total	No.	Total	No.
Door	--	--	5 sec	1	50 sec	1
Centre Tables	--	--	18:20 min	4	9:02 min	1
Men's Clothes	--	--	1 sec	1	6 sec	1
Woman's Clothes	--	--	5 sec	1	3 sec	1
Water Pump	--	--	41 sec	1	1:01 min	1
Open Crate	--	--	32 sec	1	7 sec	1
Wooden Crates	--	--	--	--	15 sec	1
Wishing Machine	--	--	1:06 min	1	32 sec	1
Reading Area	--	--	1:14 min	1	48 sec	1
Gramophones	--	--	2:40 min	1	2:24 min	2
Bedroom	--	--	2:29 min	2	38 sec	1
**Orientation	--	--	6:23 min	8	4:16 min	6

Note. Table 3 also charts the frequency of visits to each section. Min = minutes; Sec = Seconds; T= Total; No. = Frequency of visits.

Dashes represent the areas participants did not visit.

**Orientation = indicates periods of time where participants appeared to be static and/or uncertain about where they were going to move next. This table also charts the moments when participants did not focus the camera on particular section but provided commentary anyway, or when they videotaped parts of the work that do not appear in Table 2 (i.e. floor, ceiling, wall).

section during her initial encounter with the installation. Of these three sections, she devoted the majority of her time viewing the two centre tables, and stopped briefly to examine the section with the teacups and the diorama more closely. The door to the installation occupied the next major portion of time. After she went around the tables, she stopped at the Bedroom section before she signalled that she was finished looking at the work. It is interesting to note that during the first video segment, there were 18 seconds recorded under ****Orientation**. The first 10 seconds occurred after she entered the door and stepped inside the installation for the first time, while the remaining 8 seconds occurred towards the end, just before she exited the work.

b. SASHA:

Table 1 indicates that Sasha spent a total of 18 minutes and 53 seconds viewing the work during the first segment. Sasha's experience was vastly different than Mona's in respect to the amount of time he devoted to the installation, and to his commitment to each section during his first encounter with *The Dark Pool* installation. Table 2 illustrates that Sasha attempted to visit nearly all of the sections within the installation during his first segment. He did not visit the women's clothes rack near the bedroom section of the work. The video footage also documented his repeated visits to the various areas within the installation during this time. In some cases, he returned to specific sections of the work quite frequently. If we examine the amount of time Sasha spent with each section of the work solely based on the total time (and not how it coincides with frequency) we see that he devoted the least amount of time to actually entering the work through the door. He spent more time with the wishing machine and the gramophone speakers. Of all the different components within the installation, he devoted the most

amount of time viewing the two centre tables. Within that period, he allotted the least amount of time with the pair of small speakers in table two, followed by the diorama of the Dark Pool on table, and significantly more time with the diaries where the stories and descriptions about the Dark Pool could be heard. The remaining time was devoted to the corner section of table two displaying the viewfinders and the paper cup where the sound of a man counting could be heard along with the voice calling out “hello”. Sasha spent the majority of his viewing time concentrated on this particular section through his repeated visits. The first time he encountered the table, his attention immediately focused on this area. He returned to this particular area three additional times. In this case, there was a parallel between the frequency and time. The number of times he viewed a particular area of the installation did not always reflect an increased total amount of time. For example, although Sasha visited the wooden crates five times, he did not invest a great deal of time looking at the display. On the other hand, he only encountered the wishing machine area twice but for a longer period of time. Table 2 also indicates nine instances where Sasha’s experience could not be adequately characterized according to time and were therefore classified as **Orientation time. These moments accounted for a total of 1 minute and 45 seconds of this total viewing time and represented the next major allotment of time in the first video segment.

c. EMILE:

Emile spent three minutes less than Sasha viewing the work during the first video segment, for a total of 15 minutes and 53 seconds (see Table 1). She also made an effort to visit each section of the work, and returned to certain parts repeatedly (see Table 2). Emile allotted the least amount of time with the water pump. Much like Sasha, she

devoted more time to viewing the wishing machine and the reading area although she spent less time than Sasha did in these areas. Table 2 also illustrates that Emile allotted more time to experiencing the section with the gramophone speakers because she continued to sit in the chair to hear the dialogue between the two people once more. Much like Sasha, she spent the most amount of time engaging with the objects and materials cluttered on centre tables. According to Table 2, Emile visited the tables three times during the first video segment. Each time Emile walked around the tables, she devoted less time to viewing the objects located on the tabletops. There were only three instances where her first encounter with a specific part of the work was longer in duration than her second encounter, which was evident in the time she spent with the gramophones, the men's clothes rack and the wooden crates. With the exception of the gramophone section (with which she only engaged twice), the more she visited a particular part of the work, the greater her total viewing time seemed to be. In contrast to Sasha, Emile's **Orientation moments only constituted a total of 28 seconds during her initial viewing time and only occurred five times during the first video segment.

5.5 Verbal Commentary (Second Video Segment):

The narrated responses of each participant's video segment also provided greater insight into the interpretive process and how the participant constructed meaning for him or herself during the second encounter. I examined how time and movement (in the second video tape) coincided with the participant's verbal responses. Each participant's verbal responses during the second video segment helped to describe what occurred, how this time was spent, and why there were instances that were difficult to classify. As participants retraced their path through the work using the video camera, I was able to

ascertain, why they went where they did, what they noticed or became cognizant of in respect to their own physical experience, and how the camera helped document their kinaesthetic experience with the interactive components dispersed throughout the installation space. This segment also revealed parts of the installation that could not be captured during the segment that I videotaped and indicated the precise areas of interest for each participant more clearly. By doing this, I was able to chart potential changes in order to describe and illuminate the interpretive process of each participant more clearly.

a. MONA:

In Table 3, the chart indicates that the time she spent with the work is not available (--). This is because Mona refused to produce her own videotaped account of her experience with the installation. The only verbal commentary she provided was recorded during the first video segment. Her responses during these portions can serve as an indication for how her time was spent during each part of the work. For example, Mona spent a total of 20 seconds at the entrance to the work. She began by approaching the text panel. She only murmured: "This?" before she turned towards the camera and asked: "What...you want me to go through the door?" Upon entering the installation, she paused and turned back to the camera and repeated the question "You just want me to look around?" two times before she approached the centre table. Despite my reassurance that she could do whatever she felt was necessary in order to fully experience the work, I responded to Mona once more by instructing her to "go through the work". I have classified these 10 seconds inside the installation as **Orientation time because her attention was not focused on any particular item in the room.

b. SASHA

In Sasha's videotaped account of his experience and passage through *The Dark Pool* installation, there was an overall increase in the total amount of time he spent with the work (see Table 3). Aside from the areas Sasha did not discuss during the second segment (wooden crates and door) or merely pointed out (like the men's and women's clothes racks), the chart indicates a significant increase in the amount of time he devoted to other areas such as the two centre tables, the bedroom area, the gramophones section and the reading area. In addition to this, the amount of time ****Undefined time** also showed a dramatic increase.

The amount of time Sasha spent with the work during the second video also indicated that his passage through the installation was less intricate and varied than his first encounter. Although he retraced his original route, he only visited each section once with the exception of the centre tables (which he visited three times) and the bedroom section (which he returned to on two occasions).

As Sasha entered the installation, he said that he did not know what to expect behind the door. However, he did not provide any interpretations about the door or its potential significance in relation to the spatial construction and/or enclosure of the installation. Immediately after entering the installation for the second time, Sasha stopped and panned the camera back and forth over the entire room. I have classified this portion of the video under the ****Orientation** because he did not focus the camera on any particular part of the work. Instead, he used the camera to capture the entire space. Within that time, he compared the installation space to an "attic" which has an "antique" quality – a comparison he also used to describe the bedroom area. The ****Orientation**

moments occurred several times throughout the video segment, but were mostly the result of awkward camera angles which made it difficult to describe what he was videotaping and/or instances where the camera was not directed toward any particular section.

Sasha retraced his original passage through the installation from the section that drew his curiosity – the viewfinders and book collection displayed on table one. In all three encounters with the centre tables, Sasha's response to the arrangement of objects remained mostly descriptive examples of what caught his "attention" such as the viewfinders, books, audio components, and orange peels. He did manage to say that it felt as if time had stopped in the room, that these were "odd" things to own and/or collect and potentially "sinister" in nature. According to Sasha, the hand with the electrodes attached to it alluded to a "sadist or masochistic" relationship and that someone enjoyed torturing themselves or others. He really enjoyed viewing the women's diaries because it was a "personal object" that added an "authentic touch" to the work. When he came across the small dangling figures and voices of the people who narrated the legend of the Dark Pool, (on table one a little more than half way through his video tape) he began producing more associations between the objects and potential characters involved in the work. In Sasha's opinion, the person (whom the room belonged to) was depressed and had an attraction to death, dying and even torture and that there was a lot of pain. These associations were reinforced by the presence of the open crate because it reminded him of an open coffin. Sasha admitted that he was confused about a few of the objects and devices located within the installation and their potential meaning such as the miniature model of the Dark Pool scene and the nightgown soundtrack. On one occasion, he spent 1:20 minutes inspecting the cardboard flooring. Although he said that the floor caught

his attention, he was unable to explain why that particular material was used in the room. This segment was classified as **Orientation time because he was reflecting about the choice of material used to cover the floor, and unlike the other areas, the floor could not be adequately categorized as a specific component of the installation.

Throughout his video, Sasha kept repeating that he really enjoyed the audio experience inside the installation such as the “hypnotic” voice of the man counting, and the “spooky” and “eerie” voice calling out ‘hello’ from the paper cup because he was compelled to listen or even answer back. He said he felt like the experience was voyeuristic because he was eavesdropping on private conversations and/or arguments that could have conceivably taken place between actual couples. The tempo and tone of the voices in the room had a “mysterious” or “sinister” quality in his opinion. Every time Sasha encountered an interactive audio component in the work, he would step up close in order to trigger the sound. At certain moments throughout his video, Sasha would point out the noises and sounds like the clanging pipes and footsteps as he moved through the space. Sometimes, he would use the camera to trace his physical experience of the sound. On one occasion, he pointed the camera to the floor and panned back and forth in order to demonstrate his attempts at following the “nervous” pacing footsteps near the bedroom section. When he approached the large gramophones, he sat down in the chair and used the camera to demonstrate how he tried to search for the shadows dancing on the wall. His bodily experience of the audio soundtrack was particular evident when he approached the teacups. Sasha only uttered, “The tea set was put out...” before he was cut off by the music *Somewhere over the Rainbow*. At that moment, he turned around to the bedroom section and then to the tea set. He repeated this motion with the camera

two more times and on both occasions the music stopped when he turned around. Aside from saying that this was “really well done” and “very eerie”, he did not provide any further explanation.

When Sasha encountered objects and areas around the perimeter, he zoomed in on the details but provided little commentary about the potential meaning. Much like most of the areas in the installation, his response towards the bedroom area was mostly descriptive although he did suggest that someone had abandoned the room very suddenly because of the partially eaten food resting on the night table. His response towards the wishing machine and reading area was similar despite the fact that he had spent more time with them in comparison to the other areas in the room – especially the reading area in the second video. However, he did offer one insight for each of these areas. He claimed that someone was trying to communicate with the wishing machine, and that he could imagine someone studying in the chair and trying to acquire knowledge (in the reading area). Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on these thoughts, or try to connect them to the work as a whole. At times, he merely stated how he noticed a particular section such as the women’s clothes or described the dripping of the water in the makeshift water pump, but he does not offer any insight as to its function in the room or any associations that it may conjure up. This also occurred toward the end of the video with the stack of wooden crates, which constituted the most portion of **Orientation time. During his first encounter, there was a significant amount of movement in this area as he moved back and forth between the crates and the table. In this videotaped account, he did not say anything about the wooden crates although he pointed the camera directly at them before panning back and forth over the two centre tables. As he manoeuvred the

camera in this manner, he summarized his overall opinion about the meaning behind the installation. He said that a woman who committed suicide had come back to haunt the room as suggested by the various sounds echoing throughout the room such as the footsteps, the music, and the rattling pipes. Sasha compared the whole experience of him video taping his experience with the installation to the film the Blairwitch Project, which reinforced his interpretations that the stories he was hearing were about a legend and a woman's disappearance. Sasha concluded his videotaped account by reaffirming how unexpected and impressive the experience was for him.

c. EMILE:

Table 1 indicates that the total amount of time Emile spent videotaping her experience within the installation increased by approximately 5 minutes in comparison to her first visit. Of all the different sections within the installation, she devoted significantly more time with the door, the centre tables and water pump, followed by the reading area and bedroom (see Table 3). Table 3 also indicates a decrease in the total allotment of time for the remaining areas of the installation, especially with the large gramophone speakers. For the most part, the time she spent with the different parts of the work during each video segment did not fluctuate a great deal. There was however, a considerable increase recorded under the **Orientation section of the table.

Emile's videotaped encounter with the installation also captured another change in respect to the previous segment. That is, Emile visited each area of the installation only once with the exception of the gramophones, which she encountered twice. In that respect, her passage through the installation was less multifaceted during the second video segment. Nevertheless, Emile managed to demonstrate the manner in which she

became familiar with the work by walking around the perimeter, then around the tables, and back to the perimeter.

Emile embarked on her second encounter with *The Dark Pool* in front of the door to the installation. Almost immediately, she stated how the door was an ordinary museum door and how that association created a “preconceived idea” or “feeling” about walking through because she was in a museum. Emile compared the museum to a church because people are not allowed to touch things. Despite these initial apprehensions about entering the installation, she affirmed that her experience of the work was enjoyable. After stepping inside, Emile said she felt as if she had entered a “time warp” and commented on how the room reminded her of her parents. This portion was categorized under the **Orientation section because she was panning the camera across the entire room and articulating her initial response to the installation. There were other segments that were categorized according to the **Orientation section of the table. These moments occurred when she described the contents on the floor, when she introduced the security guard on her way to the gramophone speakers, and towards the last minutes of her video when she was summarizing her experience of the installation.

Although she was initially attracted to the table on her first visit, Emile admitted that she wanted to leave the “best for last” and that was why she went around the edges of the room first. Emile started by describing the whereabouts and contents of each area in the room. Aside from merely pointing out the location of each clothes rack, she provided one major comparison or insight about the possible meaning of certain arrangements. For example, she began by commenting on how the old objects and stale food in the bedroom made it look abandoned. She associated the stack of wooden crates to the theme of

travel. Towards the end of her videotape, her only response towards the open wooden crate next to the entrance was that it reminded her of an open coffin, just like Sasha. By contrast, she tended to provide more commentary about her initial reactions and reflections towards the gramophone section. At first, she said she felt hesitant and uncertain about whether or not she was allowed to sit in the chair, and claimed that she was always the one that crossed “the line” or got “too close to the painting” when visiting museums. The huge speakers reminded Emile of an artwork she had seen at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, which was about communication, and made use of male and female voices (although she did not mention the artist or title of the work). After a brief description of the reading area, she interpreted the open books scattered around the chair as codes or clues to things she should understand within the installation. For instance, the title of one of the books hinted at an accident that someone had to research. The theme of unpleasant death and suicide arose again in her commentary of the wishing machine. She stated that people were never satisfied, so they wished for something else. Emile also produced a number of insights about the water pump (which she addressed towards the end of her tape). The water pump, reminded Emile of a hospital or apothecary, and ultimately a film where the character was trapped in another person’s body. Emile interpreted these associations as the dynamics of time and being trapped between past and present.

As she videotaped the work, Emile moved in close in order to set off the interactive components and demonstrate how they worked. She also pointed out that the faster she moved around the tables, the more sounds she was able to trigger, which was good because that brought out “more emotions.” The voices emitted from various

speakers on the centre tables also stressed the theme of death and communication in her opinion. For example, the voice calling out 'hello' from the paper cup represented communication with the underworld. She connected the sound of the man counting down to his suicide attempt, and the narrated stories about the Dark Pool legend to an unexpected death. Emile also associated the dialogues between the male and female voices to the stifling nature of personal relationships. At one point, she even compared the sound of the "shuffling" footsteps in the room to her experience listening to busy waiters hurrying back and forth in Chinese restaurants.

In keeping with the theme of relationships, Emile made a connection between the two people embracing (in the viewfinders) to the shadows of the couple dancing (from the gramophone soundtrack). The themes of loneliness and abandonment were conveyed by the book titles. Some of the objects and materials displayed on the table reminded her of her own art work, the junk in her own home, as well as the art work of an artist in her program. The excerpts from the open diaries recount personal memories and how women have no control over reproduction. Travel seemed to be a recurring theme in Emile's insights about the installation. In addition to the stack of wooden crates, the partially-opened suitcase with the miniature model of the Dark Pool also indicated that someone was moving or planning to take a trip. After reading the artist's name on the suitcase, she decided that Cardiff was the main character in the work. According to Emile, the maquette inside the suitcase also served as a metaphor for the room.

Towards the end of her videotaped account (categorized as ** Orientation time), Emile associated *The Dark Pool* to her own personal state of mind as she reiterated the theme of thwarted communication. Although she admitted that she would not classify

this type of work as art because it required more “technology than technique”, she acknowledged the power of installation because the viewer had no choice but to be part of the work, which was different from the distance one experiences with painting. Once again, she referred to her own artwork (paintings) and her newly found willingness to attempt this kind of work.

5.6 Verbal Commentary (Follow-Up Interviews)

The narrated commentary of the follow-up interviews permitted me to gain a better understanding of the participants’ inhibitions within the physical space and how that affected their participation with the work, as well as their interpretations. The data produced during this stage of the research also provided greater insight on matters, which they might not have addressed in the video, as they were able to stop the video at any time to raise any additional concerns and/or insights about their experience with the installation.

a. MONA:

During the follow-up interview, Mona appeared very reserved. Her answers to the questions were very brief. As the interview progressed, her indifference towards the project and her experience became increasingly apparent, which made it difficult to probe her for more concrete answers and descriptions relating to her encounter.

As I stated before, Mona was waiting in another area of the exhibit and did not have the opportunity to see the door to the installation open and close like the other participants. Furthermore, I did not want to influence her behaviour by informing her that she would have to open a door in order to enter the work. I wanted to present her with the same problem or obstacles museum visitors encounter when they confront this

installation – becoming aware that they must acknowledge and open the door. This procedure initiates the first (and perhaps most important) step within a series of interactive requirements bestowed upon the viewer in order to experience the installation. In the beginning of the interview, she revealed her uncertainty about opening the door very briefly by stating:

I was not sure if that is where it was, and I had no idea what installation art was...

In the beginning of the first video segment, Mona asked me a series of questions about what was expected of her despite the fact that I had already informed her that she could do whatever she felt was necessary in order to engage with the work. When I asked Mona why she was so unclear about her role as a viewer, she said:

I wasn't expecting to see what I saw...I think a part of me felt uncomfortable because I was expected to do something, but I wasn't too sure about what I should have been doing.

There are numerous interactive devices and areas throughout the installation meant to lure or motivate viewers to participate. Sometimes viewers could touch or sit while other sections require visitors to listen. To fully experience these sections, the person walking through the work must make an effort to touch or get very close to certain objects, and ultimately commit their time. After looking at her own behaviour, Mona provided the following response:

I really didn't want to damage anything and...I didn't feel comfortable with the whole situation... I didn't really care to touch things but I felt that maybe I should have. I just felt really intimidated. [sic] What I saw I didn't really enjoy...I didn't want to touch. I just didn't feel comfortable.

Immediately after discussing her inhibitions and restrained body language, Mona asked me to stop the tape so she could explain what motivated her to step back and examine a particular arrangement on the table.

When I was walking around the table, and I stepped back to look at something (*she pauses*) not because I really wanted to look at it but because I felt that I should have. I thought that I should have taken greater interest.

After she admitted this to me, I asked Mona if that behaviour was triggered by my presence in the room. She quickly replied by stating:

With your presence, with his presence (security guard) and what was expected of me.

Her willingness to reveal this compelled me to search for other hidden truths or methods she may have used to move through the artwork regardless of her disinterest.

During the interview, Mona exposed her system for orienting herself through the installation, and why she decided to experience the work this way.

I felt more comfortable walking away from the security guard than walking towards him and viewing it that direction. You probably noticed that I didn't really walk all the way around the table because he was there and I didn't really care to go that far.... I guess when I went back to the cot, I was just pretending to be interested (*pauses*) I was just trying to prolong the time that I was there even though I felt uncomfortable ... I didn't want to look anywhere else.

In addition to her lack of interest in the work itself and feelings of intense discomfort, the presence of the security guard proved to be extremely problematic - a major inhibiting factor in Mona's experience with the installation, and one of the main reasons why she spent so little time with the work. In addition to feeling very "intimidated" and "self-conscious" in his presence, Mona also states that:

...having the guard there did play a major part with me spending so little time there along with other people not being there to view the art, I just felt like everything was focused on me rather than the art.

Mona was hesitant about moving on to the next video segment, and ultimately refused to participate. She appeared to be very disturbed and unsettled by her first experience. When I asked her why she declined to produce her own videotaped account of her experience, she included the guard as a major reason along with other issues relating to self-confidence, control, and uncertainty.

I felt so uncomfortable having to walk back into that room (*pauses briefly*) taking control (*pauses again*) because I really didn't feel that I was in control in the first place. I didn't feel that I should have taken over (*pause*) and walked around (*stops*) that would have taken a lot of confidence. I didn't feel like I could have done that (*pause*) with the security guard there (*pause momentarily*) because I didn't really understand how I should have been viewing the work. I didn't feel that I could have walked around and described what I thought and how I felt towards it.

While Mona was walking through the installation during her first and only visit, there were few instances where she raised her head or turned around when a particular sound was set off. Since sound was a major interactive component within the installation, I thought it was necessary to document Mona's responses and interpretations regarding the various noises, voices, and even musical chords being activated by her movement. During the interview, I asked Mona to explain why she reacted to the sound in that manner and whether or not she could tell me what the voices were saying. She was unable to provide me with an explanation. However, Mona did manage to clarify how she triggered the audio devices and what sort of mood those noises and voices created within the room.

At first, I was really confused [*sic*] walking around because I thought that (*pauses*) the sounds were just (*pauses once again*) a part of the room. I

didn't realize that whenever I take a step (*pause*) it was very confusing and kind of shocked me. It took me a while before I could figure it out (*laughing*)... I think the sounds were very dreary (*pause*) and they just (*pause*) create that sort of mood within the room (*pause*) and the room was very dark and dreary (*pause*) somewhat psychotic.

After confirming that Mona was completely intimidated, disinterested, and bewildered by the actual work of art, I wanted to know what she thought the installation was about following such a brief encounter. Unfortunately, she could not go into detail about the possible meaning of the installation even when I reminded her of the title.

Admittedly, Mona says:

I can't really elaborate on that because it's not really my interest to analyze what art is or how it's perceived... I didn't really think about it although it was obviously a woman's room and it just seemed like disparity and depression.

Overall, Mona was extremely unsatisfied with her experience within *The Dark Pool* installation. Towards the end of our interview together, she was adamant about how the work did not fit her expectations about how work of art was supposed to look.

It didn't seem beautiful, it didn't really fit my expectations of what I think art is supposed to be...at an art gallery... if I was going to spend my money to go into an art gallery, I wouldn't really be satisfied spending my money on seeing something like that.

b. SASHA

Sasha was very eager to discuss and elaborate on his experience with the installation. After finishing the video based portion of this research project, he remained in the museum for an additional two hours to explore the rest of the exhibition. As we watched the video, I noticed how excited he was about seeing himself interact with the installation. Similarly, the breadth of his responses proved to be very insightful and helpful in accounting for his adaptation within that space.

One of the first questions I asked Sasha pertained to the door. When I led Sasha down the crowded corridor and stopped him in front of the door for the first time, he was able to watch, as the security guard opened the door for him. Therefore, I asked him to explain how he reacted to having the guard lead him into the work in that manner. Sasha responded by confirming:

Had he not have been there I probably would have even mistaken it for a broom closet or something like that...I would have passed it by or not even have opened it at all...I kind of got the gist when we stopped in front of it (*pauses briefly*) and there was a security guard there.

During the first video segment, an occasional creaking noise can be heard in the background as museum visitors attempt to enter the work. Every time this occurred, the muffled (and barely audible) voice of the guard can be heard instructing them to return later. Even though the guard was always posted in front of the door to monitor the situation, I wanted to know if these noises and the presence of the guard distracted Sasha from experiencing the work. In order to assure me that this was not the case, Sasha said:

I was busy concentrating on viewing the objects in front of me and behind me; he wasn't really a factor for me. I felt pretty much alone [sic] anyway.

Almost immediately after seeing the first few minutes of this initial encounter with the installation, Sasha wanted me to stop the tape so that he could explain what aspects of the room he was drawn to right from the beginning.

When I entered (*stops momentarily*) the sounds and the darkness (*pauses again*) first struck me; then getting the overview and seeing a different assortment of books and objects...I was immediately interested in what I was going to see.

In addition to feeling instantly attracted to his new surroundings, Sasha also expressed the need to elaborate on why he was drawn to particular areas. I soon realized that he was

very curious about many of the interactive devices dispersed throughout the room because those devices motivated him to perform or interact in a certain way; and that he was able to control how they worked. The following passage explains Sasha's fascination with the voice of the man counting:

I wanted to test the authenticity of the display and of the work because I thought if I stood there long enough that there was only a set amount of numbers that I would hear and that it would just go back...to the beginning.... You get the impression that it's a man counting...its not a recording...it's a man that keeps on counting.

Sasha also wanted to comment on how he reacted to the voice calling out "hello" from the paper cup, which was also located at the edge of table one. Sasha was so enticed by this effect because:

...when he is calling 'hello', you are very much tempted to, you know... say hello back. It's like he or she is calling you...

However, when I asked him why he did not respond to the voice calling out "hello", he said:

I would have (*laughing*) I was tempted to but ... I didn't want to look ...silly because ultimately I knew it was a recording... I actually looked back to the line and wondered... if there was somebody there or not...it was a really good [*sic*] effect.

While studying the results of the first video segment, I was particularly intrigued by a few of Sasha's gestures. On two occasions, he can be seen flipping up the cover of a book and extending his arm and passing his hand over the various objects on the table. During the follow-up interview, I asked him to explain why he behaved in that manner. Sasha responded by stating:

I think I was experimenting with the motion sensors...and I wanted the story to continue again and manipulate the motion sensors.

At this point in the interview, I have ascertained that Sasha was aware that he could control the sounds and voices in the room to a certain extent by moving close to certain areas. He also attempted to touch one of the objects in the room in order to fulfil his curiosity. Sasha also claimed that he was not disturbed by the security guard's presence. Given all these assurances and realizations, I wanted to know why he did not actively engage with the wishing machine by following the instructions on the table.

Sasha answered in the following way:

.... No. I don't think I could. And even if I did have an indication...I am not sure I would have anyway because ...you would be assuming the role of that person if you did write something ...even if I did have an indication, I didn't want to cause a scene or give the security guard cause to come and ... say no, no, no, no, no.

Apparently, the security guard did have an effect on the way he interacted with the installation. At one point in the first video, Sasha only sat in the chair between the two large gramophone speakers when the guard instructed him to do so. When I asked Sasha why he complied, he said:

The power of suggestion...I had never experienced an installation art let alone this kind of installation art so I wasn't sure what (*pauses*) I could and could not do (*stops momentarily*) where the boundaries were exactly.

"The power of suggestion" does account for many of his behaviours and reactions towards the audio soundtracks. In his attempts to manipulate the noises and perform according to what the narratives instructed, Sasha was able interpret his experience with the sounds and motion sensors in the following way:

I think it kind of [*sic*] builds a story. I think they were key in establishing the haunted atmosphere of the place, the legend - the story behind the room. You could pretty much imagine that they danced up and down that area and that's where they lived...one maybe passed away or both...or maybe some kind of circumstance that led to one's passing and that person comes back and haunts the area.

Sasha was not particularly pleased with the kinds of interpretations he provided in the second video segment because he felt that he needed to visit the work repeatedly.

However, he assured me that he was incredibly satisfied with his experience.

It was so new and there was so many components that you just had to explore...and what I said earlier on about what I enjoy about going to the gallery or museum is the exploration factor, is in the discover in that you don't know what you are going to find.

c. EMILE:

My interview with Emile was very engaging and quite entertaining. Emile was pleased to recount many of her past experiences with art and museums and offered numerous personal memories to help clarify her responses. She delighted me with her sense of humour and cheerful attitude when describing her experience with Cardiff's installation.

Before I could ask Emile my first question, she started to explain to me why she had spent so much time with the installation. Eagerly, Emile revealed her motivation by saying:

...one of the reasons I spent a long time there was because I actually had the place to myself...usually when you go in the museum and you don't have that kind of luxury, somebody's behind you or you don't want to be in the way...and also, because I was doing this for you. I wanted to make sure that I didn't miss anything, that I didn't forget anything...it's the kind of thing that you look at and you never get it all in. I would have to spend the whole day there and maybe then I would have gotten around the wish machine.... It's so textured and layered...

In addition to feeling like she needed to please me (as the researcher) and to pay close attention to all the details in the room, Emile relished the fact that she was alone with the

installation because it gave her an opportunity to control the way she activated the interactive devices within the space. She offered a jovial response by admitting:

I felt I had some power (*laughing*). I like control. It's kind of neat...if I move there then suddenly this happens and after I can see the connections of what was happening.

At one point in the first video segment, Emile can be seen bending down to inspect something and then disappears from view. On another occasion, she is seen looking under the tables. During the interview, I asked her to explain what she was looking for. Emile stated that she was looking underneath the tables in order to examine the wiring. When I asked her to explain, she laughed as she offered the following reasons:

I was interested in the mechanics of the thing too... if ever I want to do an installation (*laughing*) I was looking to see how it worked (*laughing once more*).

Although Emile claimed that she felt alone and empowered within the installation space by attempting to trigger the various sounds, her behaviour on the videotape does not seem consistent with her responses. In other words, she is seen taking instructions from the guard and admitting that she did not want to sit in the chair because she was in a museum. Furthermore, she kept her hands behind her back while viewing many of the objects. As the interview progressed, she kept insisting on how being in a museum setting deterred her from interacting with the other areas within the space. Although she felt compelled to touch certain areas, it never occurred to her that she could. She reaffirmed her intense feelings of uncertainty by referring back to her experience with the gramophone speakers:

The guard told me I was supposed to sit on the chair, but I didn't want to sit on the chair because... I am always the one who crosses the line, I am

getting too close to the painting, and the guards are always telling me “Don’t go too near the work”. So, I would never have thought to sit on the chair because I thought I wasn’t supposed to... No, I wouldn’t touch anything I mean I swear, I kid you not, I have been to so many museums and the beepers always go off because I am always too close to the work. I kid you not. It happened to me over and over again [sic].

Apparently, the security guard represents an authority figure that prompts people to perform according to the perceived standards of museum conduct. Although Emile expressed some confusion in respect to the guard’s presence inside the installation, she did manage to say why his presence was positive.

I didn’t think he needed to be there.... But, he had to lead me on because I wouldn’t have sat on the chair...

Only after she realized that she could actually sit in the chair did Emile feel more confident to touch other objects like the clothes. However, the boundaries of what she perceived as acceptable types of interaction remained undefined. The following passage recounts Emile’s response to grazing her hand across the garments hanging on the clothes rack:

...if I could sit then I could touch...there is something about clothes because they have been worn by people... I wouldn’t want to disturb the way she placed things. There was a certain feeling of preciousness that I wouldn’t have wanted to disturb.

In keeping with her general apprehensions about experiencing this work within the museum environment, I also wanted to know why she perceived the door to the installation as possessing negative implications for others as well as herself. Emile revealed that she was confused about the door because:

I was wondering why there was a door.... Because I had no idea, it would be so enclosed.... To someone just walking by...it would probably be a negative thing...the door that’s closed is closed. It’s not inviting. A door ajar would be different. It looks like an ordinary house door... I’d probably think it was an office door. I wouldn’t think it was the

installation door...just an ordinary door and it's not very inviting...it's cold...typical museum (*she laughs*)

Emile's experience was extremely enjoyable. The installation created an environment, which stirred up many personal memories and aroused her senses in a deeply meaningful way. Her experience with the gramophone speakers especially delighted her. Although Emile required some reassurance from the guard about sitting in the chair, she felt that her experience with the voices was all the more enriched when she sat down to listen because it stimulated her entire body, and it encouraged her to look for the shadows.

I felt the voices going through me and.... It wasn't as if I felt that I was listening in on somebody else's conversation...but as if little spirits were going through my body...like electromagnetic energy kind of going through you.... If I had seen shadows, it would have been even better actually...

In Chapter Six, I outline my interpretations based on the results of the video study and the follow-up interviews. I also provide a comparative analysis of the participants' behaviours and verbal responses according to interaction, inhibition, and interpretation.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS

By entering *The Dark Pool*, viewers become active participants within a highly charged and potentially unsettling aural and visual environment. As such, they must make a sustained time commitment in order to experience the installation. Although the narratives are fragmented, Cardiff and Miller expect the viewer to listen and interact with the numerous devices in the room and search for coherence – for meaning. How did the three research participants process the connection between their own bodily experience and the physical environment? In what ways did inhibiting factors deter their interaction with the work? How did they construct meaning? In this section, I will compare and contrast the verbal responses and documented behaviours of each research participant in order to understand the cause and effect relationship between interaction, inhibition, and interpretation.

6.1 Interaction:

To fully participate with *The Dark Pool* installation, visitors must move through the work and interact with certain audio devices in order for the narratives to emerge. By making this kind of commitment, visitors gradually begin their search for coherence and for the meaning of the objects, stories and sounds they experience along the way – all of which are clues to an otherwise suspended and fragmented chain of events.

I will begin by analyzing and comparing how Mona, Sasha, and Emile behaved with the installation, how they oriented themselves within this particular space, and how time affected their participation. Whether or not they interacted with various areas and

devices (over others) may help to explain they acknowledged their role as a participant and became aware of the demands inherent within the physical environment.

a. MONA:

The results from Mona's first encounter and her follow-up interview revealed how incredibly uncertain and uncomfortable she felt experiencing the installation. First, she was extremely confused about how she was supposed to interact with the installation from the moment she opened the door and walked inside the work. Mona's lack of exposure to installation art and her uncertainty about what was expected of her may account her initial apprehensions. Despite all reassurances, Mona remained unclear about her role as a viewer. Furthermore, she spent very little time within the installation. Mona also admitted to not being interested in what she was experiencing. She also claimed that the only reason she examined certain details was that she felt like she needed to perform in a certain manner. In addition, Mona's system for viewing the work was only orchestrated in order to maintain a distance between herself and the security guard. In accordance with these results, Mona's lack of interest and feelings of intense discomfort motivated her to terminate her experience as soon as possible rather than prolong it. Even though Mona was unaware of the research objective, she may have decided to behave in a way that would provide me (as the researcher) with usable data within that brief encounter.

Mona maintained a distance between herself and the items on display, and she kept her arms folded across her chest throughout the first video segment. Mona explained that the reason she walked around the tables was that she felt too intimidated to look anywhere else. This explains why she appeared reserved and restrained as she

moved through the work during her encounter with the installation. This type of body language seemed to indicate a feeling of threat. Therefore, I am inclined to question whether or not she was actually processing any information about the actual work, or if she was focused on her own distressed reactions to the environment. Although Mona realized that she was activating the soundtracks, she was unwilling and possibly unaware that she should interact with those devices. Given that she did not want to damage anything and that she felt confused and uneasy can explain why she did not want to take the initiative to explore the room any further. As a result, she did not allow herself the opportunity to participate with the work in the intended manner.

b. SASHA:

Aside from being non-experts, the only similarity between Sasha and Mona's experience was that neither of them ever had previously experienced an installation. One of the major distinctions between the two participants was their level of interest in the work itself. Sasha's was intensely involved with the subject matter and space. Mona, on the other hand, was not as impressed. In other words, Sasha was intrigued by the installation from the beginning. This is one of the reasons he said he spent so much time with the installation.

In addition, Sasha's passage through the work demonstrated that he opted to experience objects as he came upon them rather than consciously creating a method for moving through the space. In that respect, intuition and spontaneity seemed to guide his movement and motivation to discover new areas. This may also explain why his passage through the installation was complex and varied.

Sasha's experience was further enriched by his patience and determination to explore the different sections. This leads me to question whether this was a learned behaviour resulting from numerous museum visits, which may indicate that he was more familiar and/or at ease with the process of viewing art within a museum/gallery setting than Mona.

Sasha's body language in the first video demonstrates that he was not overly cautious about touching and/or approaching the items on the table. Even though he acknowledged the authority of the security guard, he appeared to be very casual as he moved through the installation. By taking the initiative to inspect the objects very closely, Sasha learned to appreciate the fact that he could control and manipulate the sounds within the room, while Mona did not. Therefore, he was able to trigger and play with more interactive components, and participate with them. Sasha's interest in the work also stemmed from having had the opportunity to amuse himself with the sheer mechanics of the installation, which may have also accounted for Sasha's prolonged fascination.

c. EMILE:

Much like Sasha, Emile seemed to be intensely interested and stimulated by the atmosphere inside the installation. Although she spent a little less time than Sasha engaging with the work in both segments, she too made a serious effort to absorb the auditory stimuli and visit nearly all sections of the work. By doing so, she was able to gather more information to treat as meaningful clues. As she said, being alone in the gallery motivated her to spend a great deal of time within the installation space. However, Emile also stated that my presence inside the room had an effect on the amount

of time she spent with the installation. It seemed that her participation in this study and the desire to please me explains why she made an effort to carefully inspect the contents of the room.

Emile's movement through the installation was just as intricate as Sasha's passage through the work. However, Emile had a more systematic and repetitive method for viewing and interpreting the installation, and she made a conscious effort to delay gratification for the areas that intrigued her most. Although she indicated that she was a little overwhelmed by contents of the room, she did not appear particularly hesitant about moving from section to section as she maintained a steady, and continuous pace around the room.

Emile also appeared to be more cautious about approaching parts of the work by the way she would lean over objects and keep her hands behind her back. Respecting the position of objects was one of the reasons why she was so careful. Nonetheless, she was able to engage very closely with certain objects in order to trigger the voices and sounds. Becoming aware of her own power and sense of control within this environment explains why she took the time and initiative to inspect small details. Emile enjoyed listening to the narratives, which surprised and prompted her to perform in ways intended by the artist. In addition to the multitude of objects and the luxury of having the space to herself, Emile's curiosity towards the technology used in the room may explain why she was compelled to explore the work even further.

Of the three research participants, Mona was the only one who felt compelled to terminate her experience because she was uncomfortable and uninterested in the work. Consequently, she was unable to make the kind of sustained commitment that Cardiff and

Miller expected from viewers. Sasha and Emile were incredibly thorough, patient, and motivated about exploring the space. They were truly interested and intrigued by what they were seeing and experiencing and thus, they were interested in the room, and were motivated to spend more time and energy moving through the work. My presence inside the room also had an affect on the way participants behaved with the work. The installation offered multiple routes for exploration, which meant that they could move in whatever direction they wished. Emile and Sasha kept moving and they were able to discover more clues. Similarly, by taking a chance to approach or inspect and experience the details up close, they were able to gather more information about the contents within the room.

Perhaps the work had a greater entertainment value for them because it was so enclosed and full of auditory effects. Perhaps having experienced early success in interacting with certain devices motivated them to continue. Even though the objects within the installation were old and obsolete, all three participants were aware of the technology. This was especially important for Emile and Sasha who were curious about how the sounds were activated, and they felt it was necessary to test them further. Even though all participants realized that they had the power to activate the sounds and stories within the room, Mona was the only one that expressed no desire to interact with them. For Sasha and Emile, becoming aware that they could control and manipulate the sounds was empowering and encouraged exploration and action. Feeling in control of the situation helped them interact with the installation. By taking chances and being adventurous, they were able to enjoy the work and benefit from that experience. In that

respect, having the opportunity to play with the audio effects was an important part of the discovery process and possibly the entertainment value of the work.

6.2 Inhibition:

Cardiff and Miller create an environment in which visitors feel as if they have stepped into a space outside the neutral museum and/or gallery setting. Visitors cannot begin to fully appreciate *The Dark Pool* until they discover and then take the initiative to open an ordinary white door. In doing so, viewers must risk their privacy and power in order to *participate* within an unsettling and confusing labyrinth of objects and sounds. How do Mona, Sasha, and Emile respond to these expectations? Are they able to meet the challenges of this environment?

In this section, I interpret how the participants responded to potential inhibiting factors and whether or not they were able to adjust. In doing so, I attempt to understand why these inhibitions occurred and how they may have affected their interaction with the work.

a. MONA:

Mona's entire experience with *The Dark Pool* appears to have been thwarted by numerous inhibiting factors. Her inability to interact with the work was the result of the following: a lack of skills or goals as a viewer; caution about damaging the work; no previous understanding and exposure to installation art; different expectations about what art in a museum should look like; and severe lack of interest. Mona was extremely uncomfortable, doubtful, and anxious about the whole experience. She was not aware that she had to open the door in order to enter the installation. Even after reading the didactic panel next to the door, she still required reassurance. Mona's confused state may

have initiated a series of hesitant behaviours once inside. In addition, the security guard and I played a major role in how she experienced the work. Our presence restricted the way she moved through the installation, and why she approached certain areas. Mona was so disturbed by the security guard's presence that she absolutely refused to continue with the second segment. As Mona revealed during the follow-up interview, her inhibitions stemmed from a general unwillingness to be the centre of attention and an inability to take control. Mona may consider installation art as intimidating rather than empowering, especially as the sounds and contents within the space provoked morbid associations, as stated during the interview. Not only was Mona selective about what she considered art; she was also particular about what kinds of art she would choose to encounter. This experience was full of negative consequences for Mona because she perceived the work as an invasion of her private space. Her experience can be characterized by an inability to adapt to the demands of the physical environment and the impeding factors she confronted along the way.

b. SASHA:

Sasha did not interact with all the areas intended for audience participation despite his brief attempts to activate the certain sounds by touching one of the objects or passing his hand over a few items. His only physical contact with the wishing machine occurred when he leaned against the chair in front of the desk. At one point, he also required some assurance that he could sit down in the chair and listen to the conversation emitted from the large gramophone speakers. There are three reasons Sasha gave for his feelings of uncertainty about what he could touch within the room. First, he did not want to give the security guard a reason to approach even though he stated that he was not affected by his

presence. Furthermore, Sasha did not want to look “silly”, so he curbed his temptation to answer the voice he heard through the paper cup. Much like Mona, Sasha did not want to engage in any kind of behaviour that would draw attention to himself. Lastly, writing a wish would mean that he would assume the role of character in the story. It seems as though the boundaries between inappropriate and intended behaviour were not clearly delineated for Sasha. He remained reluctant to take a chance regardless of any indications that may have suggested otherwise. Although he claimed to value his control when manipulating the audio devices, he was hesitant about making a sustained physical contact with his body or assuming any other role than the viewer. His previous experiences within museums reinforced the idea that touching works of art was unacceptable and his lack of exposure to installation art made him feel hesitant about what he was permitted to do within the installation. One major distinction between the two participants rested in Sasha’s ability to adjust to the environment in spite of his inhibitions. This may explain why he continued to explore and enjoy the work while Mona could not be convinced to enter *The Dark Pool* for one final visit.

c. EMILE:

Despite her art expert status in this research study, Emile also had trouble actively participating with certain areas in the installation. Much like Sasha, she required confirmation that she was allowed to sit in the chair between the huge black speakers. Emile’s experience was also similar to Sasha’s in that she did not interact with the wishing machine despite the instructions prompting her to do so. Emile’s body language and commentary indicated her general reluctance to touch the objects on display. Her unwillingness to harm the fragility of the items resulted from a respect for Cardiff’s

artistic process and partially accounted for this behaviour. Even though she did not have a problem entering the work like Mona, Emile perceived the door as a barrier rather than an entrance, especially when placed within the sterile neutrality of the museum environment. Although she did not appear intimidated by the guard, her previous museum experiences strengthened her inability to participate with the installation, as she desired. Like the other participants, Emile also seemed unclear about the boundaries between active participation and unacceptable behaviour within a museum context. Like the other participants, Emile confused her role as a *viewer* within the museum setting with that of *participant* inside an installation. Even though she was aware that installation requires individuals to enter into an actual space, she was doubtful about the acceptable level of interactivity. Emile was not invincible to the demands of the environment. As a result, she faced the same challenges the other participants encountered during this study. However, despite the fact that certain inhibiting factors deterred her from fully participating with all the interactive areas, like Sasha, Emile was able to compensate and continue exploring the installation.

In the end, Mona was unwilling to relinquish her privacy and security in order to participate with this installation in the intended manner. The demands of the physical environment were too confusing and threatening for her to comprehend. Sasha and Emile, on the other hand, rose to the challenge and were able to adapt to the environment in spite of their inhibitions. Even though each participant's exposure to art and museum settings varies, there are inhibiting behavioural and cognitive patterns that occur with all three participants. The boundaries between acceptable museum etiquette and the kind of behaviour required within the installation were unclear for each participant. All three

participants required assurance that they could touch and actively participate with certain areas regardless of indications or instructions within the space. The fact that the participants were more compelled to listen rather than touch seems to indicate that interacting with sound produces less consequences than touching. In that respect, the act of listening is as safe as looking within the museum context because each were performed without have to make physical contact with the work of art. Because they were all alone in the space, (except for the security guard and me) they could not watch how others interacted within the space and follow their lead. Therefore, being alone within the installation may have play an important role in how each participant responded to the physical space and the inhibiting factors. The participants did not approach the security guard for assistance, and (aside from Mona and her initial questions) they did not ask me for help either. Finally, the door to the installation was ambiguous and could be construed as an obstacle. Sasha and Emile had the opportunity to watch the door opening and closing while Mona did not. This supports further evidence that visitors need to take lead from others so they can take the initiative to behave accordingly. For many, watching others as they fail or become embarrassed is better than having than drawing negative attention to oneself.

6.3 Interpretation:

Cardiff and Miller transform a section of the gallery into an abandoned research study once occupied by a couple who had been studying the secrets behind a legendary pool of water. The contents and disjointed narratives within the room convey the themes of time, memory, fact, fiction, knowledge, occult, alternate reality, absence, and loss (Crowston, 2002). According to the artists, the room also serves as a metaphor for the

brain, as well as their own artistic process (Enright, 2001). In that respect, they create a parallel between themselves and the imaginary couple who has mysteriously disappeared. Barrett (1994) states that: "An interpretation of an artwork need not match the artist's intent for the artwork" (p. 11). Interpretation is the responsibility of the viewer and the meaning of a work of art may comprise a variety of interpretations beyond what the artist intended (Barrett, 1994, p.11). Furthermore, each person constructs his or her own meaning based on individual perspectives (Freedman, 1997, p, 25). By actively searching for meaning, participants attempt to understand the possible themes, ideas, emotions, issues etc. the installation may communicate or express as a whole.

The verbal commentary produced by the participants during their videotaped accounts and follow-up interviews illustrates how they constructed meaning for themselves. By comparing the kinds of commentary they provided, I examine the ways they integrated their bodily experiences into their verbal commentaries and interpretations.

a. MONA:

Mona had very little to say about the installation since she expressed no interest in trying to interpret and analyze what art is meant to express. There seemed to be a dichotomy inherent in her experience. On the one hand, Mona was very disturbed by the work, and on the other hand, she expressed feelings of ambivalence about the meaning or intention behind the piece. Was her ambivalence caused by an attempt to compensate for her lack of clear goals and intimidation? Even though Mona slowly became aware that she was activating the sounds and narratives within the space, she did not spend enough time inside the installation for the various stories to emerge, nor did she allow herself to

examine all the different areas. By refusing to produce her own videotaped account, Mona denied herself the opportunity to further acquaint herself with the installation. This explains why she was unable to elaborate on why she believed the room belonged to a woman, or why the work was about disparity and depression in the follow-up interview. The only thoughts she expressed about *The Dark Pool* related to how negative and uncomfortable the experience made her feel. Mona had very strong reactions within the space, which seemed to support her ideas about the possible meaning behind the work. In that respect, she was able to react emotionally and physically to the space, but was unable to construct additional interpretations based on all the visual and auditory clues dispersed within the space. Her lack of participation and restrained movement in the installation can also account for this inability. Mona's explanation of the room was limited to one hypothesis: the room was obviously about a woman and the work was about disparity and depression. Although she was unable to explain why or how she constructed this interpretation during the follow-up interview, her responses suggest that she was able to access the underlying feeling behind the installation.

b. SASHA:

Sasha's experience was vastly different from Mona's because he found the work very stimulating and intriguing. He was particularly drawn to the personal objects such as the diaries, and he was especially delighted by the sound effects. The two participants differ greatly in the time they devoted to the installation and in how they moved through and interacted with the work. Although Sasha spent so much time inside the installation in both video segments, his verbal responses towards the contents of the room during the second video were few and mostly descriptive in nature. The fact that he used the camera

to demonstrate where he moved within the space and why may indicate that he was still familiarizing himself with the work and the interactive audio devices. This may explain why he produced very little commentary as he re-traced his path through the work.

Nevertheless, Sasha was more thorough about how he moved through the work, how he chose to examine various details along the way, and adapt to the inhibiting factors within the space. His path was more intricate and as a result, he was able to absorb and gather more information from the objects dispersed throughout the room. Sasha compared the room to an attic that had been abandoned because of the partially eaten food. He also associated certain displays with the themes of death, pain and the accumulation of knowledge. Although he did not actively participate with the wishing machine because he felt inhibited, he imagined that someone was using it to communicate but he did not say with whom or what. Furthermore, Sasha also spent a lot of time listening to sounds and narratives, which allowed him to interact with the work in the manner suggested by the voices. By doing so, he was able to gather more information about the potential characters involved in the story and their significance to the room. He described the experience as “voyeuristic” even though he was not watching the people but rather listening to their conversations. Active participation prompted him to account for the haunted atmosphere and imagine that the couple talking (through the speakers) was the same couple who once lived in the room. Therefore, Sasha realized that the sounds and narratives were intended to create a story about the inhabitants and their role in the urban myth known as *The Dark Pool*. Sasha interpreted *The Dark Pool* installation as being a legend about a woman who committed suicide and disappeared. The woman, according to Sasha, came back to haunt the attic where she once lived with her partner. In contrast

to Mona, who could not explain her assumptions about the work, Sasha was able to generate several themes and used them to explain and support his final interpretation about the potential meaning and intention behind the installation.

c. EMILE:

During the second video segment, Emile had numerous observations and insights about what the various objects and areas were meant to convey. Even though Emile spent less time than Sasha in the second video, she offered more commentary about her experience, impressions, insights, emotions etc. than he did. The majority of Emile's responses were based on her personal associations rather than her background knowledge about art. Furthermore, she consciously treated the items on display as visual clues that would help her interpret the work. By moving around the space and interacting with the audio devices, Emile was able to offer insight or possible explanations for each area. Emile linked the objects and narratives within the room to time, loneliness, abandonment, and personal relationships. In addition to these, Emile also discussed three major salient themes that she repeated throughout her videotape. They were unexpected and/or unpleasant death by suicide and/or accident, thwarted communication, and travel. The voices and narratives helped to reinforce her interpretations about death, communication, and the spirit world. In that respect, both Emile and Sasha associated the sounds with a haunting ghostly presence within the room. Unlike the other two participants, Emile was the only one who thought that Cardiff was one of the main characters in the story and that the diorama inside the suitcase was the meaning behind the work. Even though she offered more commentary about her experience and what the installation may have been about, she also seemed convinced that the overall meaning was about suicide. Much like

Sasha, her bodily experience was enriched through active participation and by taking the opportunity to sit and listen to the conversation being emitted through the speakers. In doing so, Emile was able to connect her search for the dancing couple to the image of the couple embracing inside the viewfinder. Emile integrated her experience of individual sections in her interpretation of the installation as a whole.

For Sasha and Emile, active participation stimulated their senses, imagination and prompted them to search for additional references within the space. Both participants used this experience to support their interpretations about the installation. By taking their time to move through the space, visit several areas, and interact with the audio devices, they gathered visual and auditory information that helped them explain the work's possible meaning. Mona also used her bodily experience to explain what she thought the work was about, but her insights were based on her affective reactions towards the environment, which she perceived as negative and alienating. Mona did not feel compelled to search through the installation like the other participants. This may be because Mona did not feel that she was capable enough to continue.

Time was an important factor in the interpretive process. Mona did not remain with the installation long enough to fully experience the various narratives and interactive devices. Although Sasha spent the most amount of time with the work, the majority of his videotaped account was not narrated. According to Lachapelle (1999), non-narrated segments of videotape may be utilized by the research participants (or informants) to show or contemplate the work by allowing it to "speak" for itself, to reflect about the work before commenting on it, or to make technical adjustments to the video camera (Lachapelle, 1999, p. 248). These three categories may explain why Sasha was so

involved with capturing the audio effects and how he moved through the space. In addition to this, Sasha claimed that he needed more time in order to feel satisfied with his interpretations in the follow-up interview. He provided more commentary about the installation during the follow-up interview than in his own videotaped account. Emile also insisted that time was an important factor in experiencing the numerous details within the work. In addition to making a sustained time commitment in order to experience the work, participants required more time and continual exposure to the installation in order appreciate its numerous facets.

In Chapter Four of this thesis, I referred to Williams (1998), who attributed the desire for closure with this particular installation to the visitors' need for more "substantial authorial control" (p.67). In this study, the content of all three participant's interpretations contained sombre and morbid themes. Although they were able to generate several themes for the work, the participants remained convinced that the work was about one particular event or incident.

As an art expert, Emile made more references to her personal experiences rather than her background and/or theoretical knowledge about art when discussing the installation. In this study, the non-experts relied more on their sensorial and affective responses than on their own personal experiences when discussing the work. The participants' responses in this particular case were different from those collected in Lachapelle's (1999) study, which suggests that art experts use their background knowledge, while non-experts refer to their own personal experiences and affect when responding to works of art (Lachapelle, 1999, p. 19). Emile may have relied on her personal experiences because she lacked a theoretical understanding of the issues and

practices surrounding installation art. In other words, she is not an installation art expert. Furthermore, she did not depend on her general understanding of art (history, theory, aesthetics) to help her engage with the work. On the rare occasion that she did mention the work of other artists or other artworks, she failed to elaborate or provide any critical information that would help to address the content or intent behind the work. The data gathered from the art-expert in this study was similar to the experience of the expert in my pilot study, who could not call upon her theoretical and background experience in fine art to facilitate her understanding of the work (Krstich, 2002). This has led me to question the ways in which active participation may supersede the reliance on background knowledge of art – especially when experiencing and interpreting an installation as opposed to more traditional forms of art.

The following section summarizes the goals, objectives, and findings of this thesis. I also provide a discussion of important questions arising from this study as well as put forth recommendations for researchers and museum educators.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Research Objectives

The goal of this thesis was to describe and interpret how bodily experience affects the interpretation of meaning in contemporary installation art. By conducting a video based research study, I was able to gather information on how active participation unfolds when three people who have different art experiences take the initiative to engage with an installation.

Installation art requires viewers to become *active participants* and use their bodies to explore and construct meaning within a given amount of time. This type of art form also forces the *participants*' awareness and orientation by presenting them with numerous decisions and tasks to negotiate within a multi sensory environment. Through active participation, visitors search for meaning and bring the work into existence as a work of art. In doing so, installations have the potential to bridge the gap between artist and audience and provide immediate access to meaning. However, this system of viewing creates additional expectations for *participants* and confuses their more traditional understanding of their role as *viewers*. These expectations may deliberately attempt to invade or compromise the boundaries between public and private space during the art viewing experience. As a result, inhibitions may arise which deter individuals from realizing and becoming acquainted with their role as active participants. The preconceived ideas pertaining to acceptable forms of behaviour within the museum/gallery setting reinforce uncertainty, hesitation, and feelings of powerlessness.

To fully appreciate and experience an installation is to place oneself within an environment more akin to architecture because visitors must enter into the work rather

than move around it like sculpture or stand in front of it like when viewing a painting. Once inside, participants must absorb and process a wider range of multi sensory stimuli because they stem from an amalgamation of sources. In addition to the act of seeing and moving when experiencing more traditional two and three dimensional art forms, participants must also process information from the auditory, tactile and olfactory senses when they encounter an installation. Placement and the arrangement of objects, spatial layout, and multiple routes make the search for meaning more complex and challenging.

By using Lachapelle's Informant Made Videos (IMV) as my methodology, and making certain alterations to the procedure and data analysis, I was able to study how an expert, a non-expert, and *museum-goer* used their time, bodies, and verbal responses when encountering an installation. This research method has allowed me to document the body/space dynamics within a given installation space and observe the inhibiting factors as they happened and how participants responded to these occurrences. There were four main objectives for this study: 1) To provide qualitative data focusing directly on the issue of active participation with installation art; 2) To examine the phenomenological relationship between body and space in art viewing experiences; 3) To understand how bodily experience informed the construction of meaning; 4) To contribute towards a better understanding of how inhibiting factors affected interaction and the construction of meaning with installation art. By using *The Dark Pool* (1995) as the subject for this study, I was able to observe and document how participants responded to being enveloped within a strange and mysterious atmosphere, and how they oriented themselves within a labyrinth of intricate arrangements, sounds, and narratives – all concealed from sterile neutrality of museum space.

Findings

The results from this study revealed several similarities between all the participants despite their differences in background knowledge or previous art experiences when dealing with inhibiting factors. For example, both experts and non-experts experienced the tension between their previous museum/ gallery experiences and their lack of understanding about what active participation entails within the installation space. In this study, all the participants required assurance that they could interact with an installation. For each participant, the amount of acceptable and intended interactivity remained unclear despite additional reassurances. Being alone (without any other museum visitors) inside the installation may have jeopardized how participants responded to the physical space and the inhibiting factors in that they may needed to take the lead from others so they could behave accordingly. Similarly, the presence of the researcher may have created additional expectations for participants. In other words, when participants were aware that the researcher was observing them, they behaved in ways that they thought would please the researcher (even when they were not aware of the research objective). In this study, the participants did not wish to compromise their confidence levels by getting into trouble with security guard or by drawing negative attention to themselves. Furthermore, audio interaction provided the participants with a less intimidating means of experiencing the installation because they did not have to make physical contact with the work of art. This study revealed that the expert faced the same obstacles and problems as the non-experts when engaging with an installation. However, adaptation to these inhibiting factors was necessary in order to continue exploring the installation. Both expert and *museum-goer* both enjoyed controlling the

audio effects, whereas; the lack of control deterred the non-expert from engaging with the work any further. The only time the *museum-goer* did not want to take control and participate was when he thought he would be assuming the role/identity of the character in the narratives. The non-experts seemed to forgo interaction when that compromised their sense of personal space while the expert's reasons stemmed from a respect for the artistic process and arrangement.

Participants needed to make a sustained time commitment in order to fully appreciate and interact with the installation. This type of commitment towards exploring the work occurred when the participants were interested and motivated to explore the space. Awareness and manipulation of the technology also prolonged the amount of time participants spent with the work. Time was also an important factor in the interpretive process. Participants gathered more information when they took the time to move through the work and allowed the narratives to emerge. When the participants realized that they could control the audio devices, they felt more empowered. This experience prompted the participants to take action. Bodily experience and active participation within the installation enriched overall experience, helped trigger their imagination and the search for visual and auditory clues that helped the participants to construct meaningful interpretations. Although in a limited way, the non-expert used her distressing bodily reactions to create meaning within the installation. As in my first pilot study, the expert used personal experiences, rather than theoretical frameworks when discussing the installation. Participants also attempted to achieve one solid interpretation rather than offer many possible hypotheses.

Discussion

Numerous questions arise from this study. There are different levels of artistic expertise and an *art expert* may not necessarily be an *installation art expert*. This leads me to question the ways in which an expert on installation art (a person studies, exhibits, or creates this particular art form) will respond when s/he encounters an installation, in comparison to an art expert (like Emile). Will the installation art experts use their bodies and/or personal experiences or their theoretical and historical knowledge on the subject? Is bodily experience a great equalizer among different levels of expertise in that it requires action and experience before background knowledge? Another line of inquiry stems from observing how the research participants responded to the security guard. What is his role? Does he become part of the work, an authority figure, or an educator? How does the researcher's presence contribute as an inhibiting factor?

Recommendations

Video based research is helpful in documenting kinesthetic behaviour as it unfolds in time. Participants in this study have had the opportunity to experience the installation within a controlled environment in that they did not have to share the space with other people except for the guard and myself. For further study, I recommend that researchers introduce additional variables by examining how individuals interact in a less controlled atmosphere and with other people within the space. Instead of conducting this study with a hand held video camera in the first segment, a mounted camera inside the work may create a less inhibiting situation for the participant. Although this method is helpful in gathering data on individual experiences within one particular work, a less conspicuous method for gathering data on how museum visitors interact with installations

can be in the form of field notes or interviews with the security staff or attendants. Compiling information in this manner can reduce researcher interference, participant expectations about pleasing the researcher, and examine more natural and/or inhibiting behaviours among a larger group of people. Researchers studying viewer response can also examine how both *installation art experts* and *art experts* respond to the same installation space. In this study, I focus on installation art rather than *site-specific* installation. Researchers can examine how site specificity changes viewer participation and meaning by placing the installation in a different context. In this study, I do not provide the participants with any didactic material and/or text even though this information is readily available outside the installation door. My final suggestion is to document the ways in which didactic material influences interaction and the search for meaning.

Creating a greater awareness of the intrinsic relationship between body and space in the interpretation of contemporary art installation will allow museum professionals to gain a better understanding of how inhibiting factors within the museum setting can affect how viewers respond, or interact with different installations. This information can help them explore different ways of training the gallery staff when in the presence of visitors. By addressing visitor behaviour surrounding this kind of artwork, museums can provide visitors with the necessary tools to explore these works autonomously, or under the guidance of the education department. Museum education can also improve on how they investigate these works with the public and facilitate their ability to explore the meaning of the work. Understanding visitor behaviour is crucial for examining installation art since interpreting the meaning of installation art requires more

concentration on the role of the body as it moves through the space of the work, and/or possibly interacting physically with various parts of the work. Educators need to treat installation art different from the more traditional art forms such as painting, drawing, and sculpture. Making use of phenomenological models for art criticism may help visitors to examine the unfolding process from various angles and degrees. What is significant about these types of models is that they allow viewers to examine their bodily experience in relation to the work, before they attempt to create meaning. Perhaps this strategy can alleviate the dichotomy between art experts and non-experts by encouraging museum visitors to focus first on their physical interaction with the work before their theoretical and/or art historical understanding (or lack thereof).

By studying the phenomenological experience of an actual perceiving body that creates meaning through action, art educators can better understand the nature of 'active' viewer participation.

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APPENDIX A: SOUNDTRACKS

Script

Soundtrack #1

Older Woman: They had known about the Black Pool all their lives because it was a legend. It was a pond filled with blackness, a surface so shiny and dark that you could see yourself. They discovered it twenty years ago but lots of people already knew it was there. Tarah was a sleep woman who believed that the fate of the fate of the worlds rested on the changes in her body, which she recorded each day. Some days she wouldn't eat to prove that there was a connection. She also believed that if she visualized something it would happen. Maybe that's why she thought she could walk on water. Allan was in love with Tarah because she moved like a deer in the house. He was also in love with her because she had beautiful breasts that fit his large hands and he didn't care that she didn't know he was there because she let him caress her all day and dress her in beautiful clothes. But one day Tarah went to the black pool and disappeared. In another part of the world is someone who knows why. I live in that other part of the world where trees don't grow unless you water them. I am seventy-eight years old and very thin. My hair used to be red but now it's white.

Soundtrack #2

Young Girl: People believed that if they could only reach the surface at the middle of the pool they would know the secret. So they built a laboratory on top of it. The structure took six months to build. It passes over the pool in an arc and reflects the stars onto the water. There is a magnifying glass that electronically analyzes the images coming from the water's surface. The bridge is a passage for scientists and a passage for tourists who come to look for \$25 each. Allan said that he jumped off the bridge with bungee cords tied to his feet. At the surface he was sure that he saw Tarah's face in the water, so he reached towards

her with his hand outstretched to touch her once more. His fingers entered the black oil of the pool. When he bounced back up, his fingers were gone. There is a stand at the pool now that sells fake fingers as the legend of Allan and Tarah grows. There is also a scientific book about it sold there, but it is difficult to read.

Soundtrack #3

OW: You know, I understand now what happened. I have been reading a lot about drowning witches and people wanting to possess things. This is my account. Tarah phoned me and told me to come, told me what she was going to do. I traveled for three days in the train to get to the pool. Signs of it started on the second day as billboards appeared announcing the benefits of the water and the good hotels around it. People called it the oracle because they want to have something to believe in. There is no proof that it says anything or shows them anything but their reflections. I could tell you another story about the invention of time or how my heart pumps faster when I run, but these are just stories. Who am I? I came from the other side of the world and I am very old with long white hair, and Tarah called me on the telephone to come here. I'm sorry I came too late but I am old.

Soundtrack #4

YG: The pool was 40 feet in diameter. The edges were lined with metal of a sort that was unknown to the people and thus they thought that it was natural. The surface was black with oil and thick as butter. Nothing had ever been able to stay on the surface, no boat, or even a balloon; everything sank. After a while people stopped trying to get to the middle of the pool. Instead they started putting objects of devotion into it. You could hire a priest from the church beside the water to say a prayer as you threw your object in. There was even a proposition from a funeral business to have you body

deposited here after death, but no one had yet been so brave. She had taken one step into the pool and disappeared, never to be seen again. They thought she had committed suicide. Now people have started to say that the image they're seeing is her. The woman called Tarah who drowned herself in the pool. That really she floats just below the surface and comes up at night to breathe.

Soundtrack #5

OW: It's as if a piece of the puzzle fell from the sky onto my lap. The night was bright because of the moon. All the hotels were full so I thought I'd just sit by the neon light till the morning came. At first I thought it was a white swan and then because of her size, an angel. She moved so slowly towards the pool that she seemed to float, and not even pausing for a moment walked straight into the black pool. Her white dress didn't even float up around her. It was as if she opened up a seam in my vision and walked through it.

Soundtrack #6

OW: I don't think Allan knew that Tarah was going to leave. He woke up early on the night of the full moon and moved his hand over the sheets, searching for her body. He searched through the closet amongst her dresses after that.

Soundtrack #7

YG: Janet was Tarah's older sister. When she was twenty-six she realized that she had been drowned as a witch in a previous life so she took swimming lessons and learned to float. Janet put a spell on Tarah when she was four. That was why Tarah was the way she was.

Soundtrack #8

YG: After the event, they put an electronic fence around the black pool. Kids would hang onto the fence while touching others to shock them by surprise. A lively gambling business started around the fence as people bet on the odds of electrocution.

The structure over the pool was 40 feet across and 40 feet high. Bungy jumping from the bridge was popular. One person lost a finger that had entered the pool through miscalculations about his body weight.

Soundtrack #9

Man: This slice of time where they lived for ten years in the same space but alone, trying to create a community of things. One day she disappeared and her body was found in the river. He stayed for six months, working on his experiments, trying to get dead birds to fly, but then one day he just packed his suitcases and left. No one knew he lived there so no one knew he left.

Woman: Perhaps the whole thing is about my grandmother. As I'm making this her image keeps coming up again and again. Stuck in a welded-pipe wheelchair made by my uncle. It had big clumsy wheels and a suspended vinyl seat. She read a lot with the books sitting open on a card-table in front of her.

Soundtrack #10

Scene in a bar

Mike: Mike: So, you been gone long?

Judy: No.

M: I left you a note.

J: I didn't see it.

M: We're supposed to be there in 10 minutes.

J: We won't make it. I have a headache.

M: You said you'd do it.

J: Well, I changed my mind.

M: Well, change it back, I brought the nightgown, go change in the washroom.

J: Fuck you!

M: If you don't do this nothing will happen.

J: If I don't do this I won't disappear.

M: Did you remember to phone her?

J: Ya, ya, I did that days ago. I shouldn't have bothered.

M: What do you mean?

J: Well she probably won't come.

M: She's getting old...so, what are you thinking?

J: Nothing, give me that gown.

Soundtrack #11

Man: the rain was falling heavily as I left the building that night. I had forgotten my umbrella so I just turned up my collar and put my hand over my eyes and started to walk quickly home. Just then a car came screeching around the corner and I was caught in the headlights, unable to move.

Judy: My head was pounding as I sat at the table, in the dim light on the bar. The smoke from my cigarette was starting to make me feel nauseous. I stared at the bottle of Tylenol in front of me, thinking how many would it take for this headache. I reached for it at the same moment as the door opened to the daylight and he walked in.

Soundtrack #12

M: I visited the Dark Pool once. It was a long after everything was gone. The pool had disappeared years before and eventually the casinos and hotels closed, leaving their ugly concrete carcasses and broken lightbulbs behind. Who knows if what they say happened there is true. I've often wondered if it was some kind of mass psychosis induced by an unstable electromagnetic field that might have produced some form of shared hallucination ... Yeah tell that to someone like Neuman who studied it all those years. Finally drove him crazy and he jumped into it. I toured his dusty laboratory in the Dow Corning Complex. The sleepy security guard was happy to have a visitor. He thought Neuman just slipped and they made up that story later. Said he remembered the day it was gone though, like yesterday, leaving just the pit behind and nothing that had been thrown into it all those years.

Soundtrack #13

W: The longer that I have my dog the more I realize how hard it was for Leika, that Russian dog that they sent up into space. Did it have a window to look out or was it just in this dark capsule? My dog, Helen, is afraid of the dark. She sleeps wherever we put a night light but if we forget to put it on she'll pace back and forth, wandering about the house, looking for a trickle of light

somewhere. Was Leika just a stray, so that they felt not guilt, or was she raised as a puppy in the dark in small spaces, training for that one-way trip? I guess she should have been grateful: she's a very famous dog, even more famous than Lassie. Just so that they could have some flesh in the capsule.

M: I'm lying down with my face on the carpet beside the door, watching the noises outside. A tiny crack of light separates my room from the bright hall on the other side. Every once in a while someone leaves their room or comes into the building and sometimes they walk past my door.

Soundtracks #14 and 15

W: (knock knock)

M: Listen,...is there someone there?

W: Hello, can you hear me?

M: Yes, who is it, what do you want?

W: It's me again. Tell me, what do you see?

M: What do you mean?

W: Look over to the wall

M: Which wall?

W: The one to your right

M: Yea?

W: Is there a shadow?

M: yea, sort of

W: What does it look like?

M: Why, what's it matter?

W: I can't hear you

M: Why do you want to know?

W: Just tell me what you see

M: There's nothing there, just a few shadows

W: But...there was something there

yesterday

M: Like what?

W: He said that he could see the shadows of two people dancing

M: I don't see anything

W: There are in front of the tables

and they are waltzing around the room, her head's on his

shoulder,

and you can tell by the way he holds

her that he loves her.

M: That's a nice story. I'm sorry I don't see it

W: I can't hear you are you still there?

Soundtracks #16

Man's voice counting from 1 to 50

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Vesna Krstich of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of this video-based research study is to gather visual and verbal data on viewer responses towards installation art. I also understand that this research will examine the responses of an expert in fine arts as well as those of non-experts.

B. PROCEDURES

The research will take at the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, and will focus on an installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller entitled *The Dark Pool*. The study will begin with an initial interview lasting approximately fifteen minutes. The second stage will involve two videotaped segments. In the first segment, the researcher will document each participant's encounter with the installation. The participant will produce the following segment by documenting their verbal commentary as they re-trace the way they became familiar with the artwork. Each participant will be expected to devote an hour to this stage of the research study. Finally, the participant will engage in a follow-up interview based on the results of the video data, which last approximately two hours. Participation in this study will not involve any risks or discomfort.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will not disclose my identity).

I understand that the data from this study will serve as supporting material for a Master's thesis, and may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____
 SIGNATURE _____
 RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE _____
 DATE _____

CONSENT FORM

FOR VIEWING AND PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANT VIDEOS

(To be used in conjunction with the Consent Form to Participate in Research)

In regard to the research project being conducted by Vesna Krstich of the Department of Art Education at Concordia University:

This is to state that:

- 1) I understand that, as a participant in this study, I will be videotaped and will be subsequently producing my own videotaped responses towards an installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller entitled *The Dark Pool*.
- 2) I understand that these videos provide the researcher with the information required for studying viewer responses towards installation art.
- 3) I understand that the researcher, and any collaborators or assistants are required to respect the confidentiality of my participation in this study.

Furthermore, I understand that the researcher will present the findings of her research. I also understand that these presentations may include the public presentation, in whole or in part, of some of the videos made by research participants. Therefore,

☐ I hereby give my permission to public present my video, in whole or in part, within in the context of these presentations. I understand that the researcher will not disclose my identity during such presentations.

☐ I hereby inform the researcher that I refuse to have my videos presented in whole or in part, in the context of these presentations.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT TO THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

SIGNATURE _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

CONSENT FORM FOR SECURITY GUARDS

This is to state that I, _____, hereby give my consent to be present during the program of research being conducted by Vesna Krstich of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University.

The researcher has informed me that this will be a video-based research study, and will attempt to gather visual and verbal data on viewer responses towards installation art. I also understand, that as a security guard posted inside *The Dark Pool* installation space, I may or may not appear on the videotape during this study. The researcher has also informed me that this will not keep me from performing my regular duties within the installation.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without negative consequences. I have been informed that my identity will not be disclosed, and that my presence during the video segments inside the installation will not involve any risks or discomfort. I also understand that the data from this study will serve as supporting material for a Master's thesis, and that the data may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO BE PRESENT DURING THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____