

Edited by  
Christine Vial Kayser, Sylvie Coëllier

# INSTALLATION ART AS EXPERIENCE OF SELF, IN SPACE AND TIME



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CURATING AND INTERPRETING CULTURE

# **Installation art as experience of self, in space and time**

Edited by

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**Curating and Interpreting Culture**



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# Preface

Fleur Vigneron

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Combining texts that explore the experience of installations by well-known artists (Carl Andre, Bruce Nauman, Ann Hamilton, Dan Graham, Mike Kelley) with studies of a more confidential body of works (by Jean-Michel Sanejouand, Kim Kichul), this volume analyses the symbolic representations of the self, induced by the installation space in the West and in Asia. The artists mentioned here work on the visual and the auditory, associating different perceptions of light, time and space—be it full or empty space. They invite us to experience ourselves, in our physicality, in front of the work and often within the installation. The contributions question the subjective, symbolic and spiritual stakes of these artistic devices, as well as their transformative potential, which also engages an encounter with otherness: it is presupposed that it is possible to remake the journey of another, the setting up proving to be prescriptive, if only in the path it invites the viewer to take. The various essays show how the body participates in the creation of aesthetic emotion and thus contribute to a phenomenology of the artistic installation.

Apart from the extensive introduction, as well as the contributions of Christine Vial Kayser, Dore Browen and Marie Laureillard, which are included in this book, the texts were first published in French in issue 40 of the journal *Iris* in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Devoted to research on the imaginary (myths, images, symbols, representations, cultural history), *Iris* quite naturally welcomed these reflections on Installation art, one of its main axes consisting in studying the sensible, more precisely, the body, affects, perceptions, sensations. I am pleased that this second publication offers access in English to these essays,

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<sup>1</sup> The subtitle is *L'installation artistique: une expérience de soi dans l'espace et dans le temps*. This publication is on Open Access online <https://publications-prairial.fr/iris/index.php?id=222>.

which shed a singular light on the question of the imaginary self in space and time through the guidance of the work of art.

# Editors' Introduction

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## **Context and objectives**

Installation is a very ancient form if we consider that prehistoric caves and buildings dedicated to religious rituals were the supports of visual, auditory, or performative events introducing an audience participating actively or emotionally in an event, an atmosphere, a celebration that transported them outside their everyday life (Suderburg, 2000). But Installation as an art form is a recent phenomenon, considered either as an extension of sculpture (or of post-Pollock painting) or as an artistic modality that contrasts with the classical categories in that its perception is not reserved for the eyes only. In short, Installation appears to have no fixed characteristics, except to be a multiple, hybrid, complex art form. With its appetite for any element of the world and the other arts Installation is the direct descendant of Duchamp, and for the general public, almost the equivalent of contemporary art.

Installations have been the subject of much research, often dedicated to specific works (Reiss, 1999) but also to the phenomenon of Installation art itself (Suderburg, 2000; Bishop, 2005; Goldberg, 2014; Ring Petersen, 2015). Nevertheless, the vast range of the works thus named, their complexity of construction and exhibition, their potential interaction with all modalities of art and life, calls for further study. The present volume considers the general philosophical and historical questions raised by this artistic mode, without neglecting the analysis of singular works, which is the only way to remain as close as possible to their creation and reception.

The aim is not only to make a detailed critical analysis of the artworks or of this art form but mostly to track down its “phenomenal presence” in its encounter with a viewer. By “phenomenal presence” we mean the spatial, corporeal, cultural and social experience of the subject (artist or visitor), in

which both the subject and the artwork are modified, according to a spatio-temporal process. Our endeavour relates to philosophies of “process”—phenomenology and pragmatism—and to the belief that the subject seeks to “make sense” of the work in all its *enactive* dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

We postulate that in this encounter the subject's sense of being may be affected because of the immersive, poly-sensory and the kinaesthetic dimension of the installations, under the condition of openness of the visitor to the unthought, to the subconscious, to memories. Sometimes this immersion is harmonious, reconstructing a holistic, fusional subject-world relationship; sometimes it reveals the fractures between the subject and the world, even within the subject.

A relative emphasis either on space or on time distinguishes the various contributions of this volume, but they share a conviction of the indivisible dimension of space and time, whether the space-time within the subject or that which unites the latter to the world. What is thus revealed by the installations is somehow the “fourth dimension” of the psychic life.

To grasp this experiential process, the authors attempt, according to the methods of phenomenology, to situate themselves in the moment of the encounter with the work, using their own physical, affective and intentional engagement, sometimes through imaginary retro-projection, to capture the dynamic of the visual, spatial and conceptual perception of the work. Such an attitude supposes an opening, attention to the phases, sequences, articulations of the experience, between perception and cognition. The texts often make use, explicitly or implicitly, of the phenomenological concepts of *apperception*, and of *presentification*, or *appresentation*. They express the perception of the presence of the subject to itself and of the Other, in the singular lived experience, in its corporeal, affective, and temporal dimension. This requests an effort of attention both to the sensations of this presence, and to the idea which is formed out of the consciousness of this presence.<sup>2</sup> To

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<sup>1</sup> For an understanding of this important concept, see Gallagher & Zahavi (2008, pp. 98-99) and Colombetti (2007).

<sup>2</sup> “*Apperception* is the attainment of full awareness of a sensation or idea” (Collins English dictionary, online); *Apperception* is “the focusing upon a point in the perceptual field while that field continues to be perceived” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2020, Entry: Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt, online); “*Presentification* is the act of making ‘present’ an object in consciousness (...) The objects of presentations, being intuitively present, stand ‘in front of’ the mind in corresponding acts of perception, imagination, presentification” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2020, Entry: The Phenomenology of the Munich and Göttingen Circles, online). *Appresentation* is a contested term, which

this imagination of the moment is added a sensitive, embodied perception of the social, historical, cultural context, also understood as phenomenological, in the sense of Heidegger that the historical is “the entity that exists as *Being-in-the-world*” (Heidegger, 1962, Part II, ch. 5, para. 75, p. 440). The subject is formed by the experience of others, and of the environment, and the mutual effects on each other.<sup>3</sup>

Our conceptual framework is in line with an affective, somatic and non-cognitive, i.e. non-cartesian, science of emotions (Lewis, Haviland-Jones & Barrett, 2008), of which Emmanuel Mounier situates the origin as early as in the philosophy of Maine de Biran:

The modern advent of first-person psychology can be dated to Maine de Biran. Above all else, he recognises that the primitive fact of the psyche cannot be, as Locke wants, an element of mental division, nor, as Condillac wants, a residue of logical analysis. It can only be an experience, in which a personal meaning is given to the word *exist*. This experience includes the **apperception of the subject by itself**, the *I* am, and at the same time, in the same act, relates it to that which is not the *I*, otherwise the subject would remain enclosed in itself, as is always the “case in an experience that is too narrowly Cartesian (...). (Mounier, 1946, p. 576; author's translation, original emphasis)<sup>4</sup>

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meaning varies according to philosophers (Husserl / Levinas / Derrida). In short, it relates to the way we construct the image of the other, by analogy with our own body in the environment. As we are conscious of being a body with a soul, an ego, we believe that the other, having a body, has an ego, hence is an *alter ego* (Husserl, 1977, para. 50 and Fabrice Métails' s text in this volume). For a discussion on the term see, for example, Katz & Trout (2005, p. 337).

<sup>3</sup> Merleau-Ponty also says: “History means the others, the relationship we have with them” (*L'histoire c'est les autres, le rapport d'échange que nous avons avec eux*) (1996, p. 68), suggesting a continuity between micro and macrohistory.

<sup>4</sup> “On doit dater de *Maine de Biran* l'avènement moderne de la psychologie en première personne. Avant tout autre, il reconnaît que le fait primitif du psychisme ne peut être, comme le veut Locke, un élément du découpage mental, ni, comme le veut Condillac, un résidu de l'analyse logique. Ce ne peut être qu'une expérience, dans laquelle un sens personnel est donné au mot *exister*. Cette expérience doit envelopper l'**apperception du sujet par lui-même**, le *je suis*, et en même temps, dans le même acte, le mettre en relation avec ce qui n'est pas lui, sans quoi le sujet restera inéluctablement enfermé en lui-même, comme il en est toujours menacé dans une expérience trop étroitement cartésienne (...).”

This volume is the result of three workshops, conceived by Christine Vial Kayser within the research team Langarts, with APP (Arts: Pratiques, Poétiques) laboratory of the University of Rennes 2, and LESA (Laboratoire d'Etudes en Sciences des Art) of Aix-Marseille University. The title of the Call for Papers was: "The Installation, an aesthetic experience of interactive encounter in a dedicated space: a phenomenological and cognitive approach in an inter-artistic, intercultural perspective".

The aim was to understand the experience generated by installations "conceived as a spatial apparatus, designed by a producer, linking a moving observer and a prescriptive environment". Our goal was to reveal:

- The symbolic representations of the self, induced by the installation space, and through it those triggered by the place we inhabit, we dwell in, that we build through our journeys and contacts with people and things (social space, emotional, memorial space, territory, natural space).
- The challenges and issues of the making of such aesthetic devices—plastic, social and political issues—as well as their potentially transformative power.
- The cultural qualities of such spaces and the cultural determinants of the journey proposed to the viewer, including in a comparative perspective with Asian practices.

The present volume is in line with those goals. Contrary to most publications on Installations which seek to establish its genealogy, we take a more experiential—as well as theoretical—perspective. We consider Installation art as a historical phenomenon, informed by changing perceptions of individual agency, of social interactions, with a will to reconnect the individual with the environment, to re-establish its agency through his body and senses—in the face of growing mediatisation of life—(see Ring Petersen, 2015, p. 409 *et seq.*). Installation art anchors art in the life experience, away from "art for art's sake" following Allan Kaprow's intuition which led to this new artform (1993, p. 82). We interrogate the visitor's agency vis-à-vis that of the artist who conceives the devices in order for it to be effective: "Control is necessary if the variables of object, light, space, body, are to function" writes Robert Morris (1968, p. 234). We aim to illuminate the way a subject negotiates the space conceived by the artist as a succession of ruptures—or surprises—between cognition and feeling, and the dynamics resulting from this negotiation. Several texts suggest that the phenomenology

of the experience as it unravels in the visitor's consciousness, through bodily engagement with time and space. The texts offer a narrative in the first person, involving the author as a visitor, in order to testify of the journey which an installation permits, of its mechanisms, and its potentialities in terms of one's awareness of "Being in the world". Others offer a critical view of such pretence and underline the socially and culturally determined character of the experience.

### Hypothesis and state of the art

Can we renew the methods by which installations have been analysed? How does this artistic modality, willingly classified under the sign of the ephemeral, live in time? The ambition of this study is to grasp its importance and impact today and to provide a nuanced analysis where explanations and concepts have become simple. Among previous studies let us cite Claire Bishop's *Installation art: a critical history* (2005), which reference can be found more than once in this volume; Julie H. Reiss's *From margin to center, The spaces of Installation art*, of 1999; Anne Ring Petersen's *Installation art between image and stage* (2015) and a rare contribution in French by Itzhak Golberg's *Installations* (2014). These authors have shown a certain definitional consensus and an agreement on its historical development. It seems necessary to at least partially restate these definitions and the way in which the reception of the works is affected by them. We believe that this volume can renew the experiential understanding and thus the definitions of Installation art. In addition, we are happy that most of the texts are also accessible in French through a parallel online publication by *Iris*, of Grenoble University, which we edited.<sup>5</sup>

Installation art, as is now well known, introduced a new mode of modelling materials which took space as its material—the interior space of the gallery or the museum, or the outdoor space, be it rural or urban. It created a virtual arena perceived "as a whole" by the viewer. The modelling also includes the subjective experience of the viewer that the installation claims to seize "as it emerges" while the visitor walks in or around it. This hypothesis is shared by many writers on the topic, among whom Claire Bishop (2005, pp. 6, 10-11). According to Itzhak Goldberg also, installations create a space within a space, "by extension, fragmentation or intensification" (Goldberg, 2014, ch. 6 and 11). The visitor's active participation is elicited by a variety of semantic material, including light, sometimes sounds and smells. The essential

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<sup>5</sup> *Iris*, n° 40, 2020, *L'installation artistique: une expérience de soi dans l'espace et dans le temps*, <https://publications-prairial.fr/iris/> (see Vial Kayser, Coëllier, & Otto 2020).

difference with traditional sculpture and with exhibitions settings is that the visitor is now the centre around which the works is constituted, while the object is decentred, fragmented, extended to the whole space. This fragmentation forces the visitor to constantly negotiate his understanding of what takes place “the in-between, to be somewhere, to be in a room, to be in a wall, to be in your mind, to be in my mind. A workplace. A domestic place, any place, every place. The journey, the continual, letting go to find out from within.” (McCaslin, 1990 cited in Hobbs, 2001, p. 24).

The performativity of these arrangements on the viewer's perception of the space that she “inhabits” for a moment, physically and psychologically, constitutes the installation as a “device” that aims to capture and reveal the dialogic mechanisms of our interactions with physical and imagined spaces in which we wander. It transforms the viewer into a performer (Reiss, 1999), relying on cognitive and emotional exchanges between three fields: the body, the medium and the collective space (Drouin-Brisebois, 2008). Claire Bishop characterises these relations according to four types: psychoanalytic (like a dream), phenomenological (mobilising proprioceptive perception of the medium), emotional (the notion of a decentred subject) and political (highlighting mentally coercive spaces) (Bishop, 2005, p. 10-11). Goldberg's division entails, on the one hand, the utopic, all-encompassing, unitarian space—which he files under the umbrella of “Total art”—and the fragmented, dystopic, social space (Goldberg, 2014, ch. 1, location 471, online).

The present studies benefit from those that preceded them, but they aim to shed new light on Installation art, using phenomenology nourished by cognitive sciences and to measure the effects of its young history on its reception. Indeed, despite her claims of a phenomenological engagement with such a device, Claire Bishop does not make much use of phenomenology as a theory to explain why and how a viewer engages in an installation nor how this is compatible with political enlightenment. Thus, one of the aims of the workshops, and of the selected contributions is to take a closer look at these mechanisms, looking at the role of attention, and of the senses: how attention is challenged, surprised, diverted from its cognitive bias by sensuous perceptions in the revelation of a space previously ignored, and how sensuous, corporeal emotions recreate a continuity between the viewer and an invisible common space; or how the tensions and discordances between the moving self and space make visible the mechanism of self-consciousness, e.g. proprioceptive schemes, unconscious affects, or hidden cultural and social conditioning.

In doing so, we aim at offering a new methodology, which insists on art experience as a process, located in time and space, including in a cultural

space, thus echoing other practice-based research which focus on aesthetics as a sensory and body-mind process.<sup>6</sup>

### Organisation of the texts and main ideas

Installation is an artistic mode that defies simple typologies. The interactions between objects, environment, staging, video, sound... could have required as many categories, as many chapters. It was necessary, however, to order the texts in a way that was not (too) arbitrary. They are organised into four parts:

The *first part* gives the conceptual frame of this volume. After recalling the history of installations, it explains the methodology of the research by draws on a set of works according to phenomenological and cognitive approaches. The *second part* deals more specifically with a spatial and environmental typology of installations. The *third part* concerns the interactions between the arts, i.e. the fact that installations have integrated other artistic domains and notably the arts of time such as video, performances, sound, to the point that contemporary music, for example, appropriates this artistic form. Indeed, a work classified under the heading of space and examined in the second part may contain a temporal dimension, but space takes precedence, and vice-versa for works examined in the third part. It may also be the author's angle of analysis that underlines one aspect of a work often considered in another register. The choice of bringing together in the *fourth part* five studies of Asian installations by Korean, Japanese and Chinese artists brings out a range of cultural motifs, rooted in Eastern spiritual traditions. It underlines that Installation as an art form has been integrated very early on in the Far East and perceived as indigenous. It does so more visibly than if the texts had been mixed with analysis of Western installations. This part also ties up with the context of the emergence of installations in the US, as Zen Buddhism informs the art of Allan Kaprow, the inventor of this new form—then called “Untitled environment”—in March and November 1958. Irritated by a critic's claim that his “environments” were “meaningless” Kaprow refers to the Buddhist concept of “enlightenment” whereby meaning strikes out of a meaningless word or gesture by a Zen master (Kaprow in Ursprung & Elliott, 2013, p. 37). And in “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock” Kaprow paid tribute to the late artist for shifting art from the finished object to the moment of its making, from the mind to the interaction with the space of the canvas and called for a study of the “Zen quality of Pollock's personality” (Kaprow, 1958, online). We deemed necessary to study

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the research conducted within the University of Helsinki research pavilion in Venice in 2019 and its exploration of the “mutual transformation between artistic and phenomenological research practices” ([www.researchpavilion.fi](http://www.researchpavilion.fi)).

Installation art from a Zen perspective as well as under the frame of phenomenology, as Robert Hobbs underlines the heuristic affinities between phenomenology and Zen: “*Satori* resonates with Merleau-Ponty’s concept of pre-objective vision (Hobbs, 2001, p. 21). Finally, such a transcultural approach is in line with the conceptual framework of the research group Langarts, under which auspicious direction the initial workshops were organised.

### Part I Conceptual frame

In the *first part*, **Sylvie Coëllier** critically addresses the history of the term “installations” and its diffusion in *Installation: looking back over a history of the term, its modes of appearance and its meanings*. This is essential because vocabulary tends to fix understanding, and, as Sartre wrote, “Let the thing be once named, and there it is” (1998, p. 21; author’s translation). In this sense, Sylvie Coëllier argues, Installation art arrives later than we think, at least in terms of the word usage. Its diffusion, which also lays the foundations for a theorisation of typologies within the general format of installations, was mainly the doing of a British trio, Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, Michael Petry, assisted by the American historian-critic Michael Archer. The success of their catalogues shows how mature the reception of this art form was already at the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, the name “installation” changed from designating a practice located in secluded art places to meaning the public visibility of a form, and soon to a somewhat generic meaning which, today, needs to be re-examined.

The following two contributions by Christine Vial-Kayser and Fabrice Métais set out the cognitive and phenomenological framework of Installation art, a form that, more than traditional categories, elicits an exchange with the spectator’s body—a body committed to receiving an experience from a device that “prescribes” what the artist wishes to transmit. This experience that the installations solicit induces, they argue, the arousal of complex emotions and self-awareness.

In her text, “*With a beating heart*”: *A neuro-phenomenological approach to the experience of some installations* **Christine Vial Kayser** takes up the hypothesis of two researchers, Varela and Depraz, one a specialist in cognitive sciences, the other a philosopher, to reexamine the question of the “lived” body, which Husserl called *Leib* (of the same etymology as *Leben*, to live) and that he distinguished from *Körper*, the somatic, sensorimotor body. Phenomenology, from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty, asserted that the perception of the self as a subject is born from the exchange between the *Körper*, and the *Leib*, the consciousness of one’s actions and the environment. For Depraz and Varela, it is the heart, the “beating heart”, which is the first motor of this exchange, before the brain, the latter being procedural, turned towards action. According to their hypothesis, the heart is oriented towards existence, and the

heartbeat unites “objective time and subjective time”. Christine Vial Kayser shows the possible bias, the limits of such a hypothesis with regards to recent neuroscientific literature, but also its creative contribution to the study of installation works, which no longer leave the predominance to the visual. She exemplifies, through the recall of her experience of installations by the British artist Andy Goldsworthy (b. 1956) and the Chinese artist Qiu Zhijie (b. 1969), how the emotion of the viewer passes through the heart, the centre of the body, in a dialogical exchange with the brain.

**Fabrice Métais'** phenomenological and cognitive approach in *Experiencing the other: intersubjectivity, alterity and artistic installation*, also examines the interaction between body and object so often (and precisely) central to installation studies. But he rejects the all-too-common expectations based on a presupposed uniformity, generic character of emotions implied by the phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, re-envisioned in the light of Levinas. Métais critically questions the very hypothesis of the workshops at the origin of this volume, based on the understanding of the installation “as the bringing together, by an author, of a mobile observing subject and a prescriptive environment”. What does it mean to prescribe an experiment to an “other”, however consenting, individual, he asks? On which presupposition of a universal subjectivity is this prescription of an experience-based? How since Husserl and Merleau-Ponty do we understand the way a body grasps the fundamental properties of an object? What are the springs of intersubjectivity on which the installation (as well as performance) is built?

## **Part II Installation and space**

The second part brings together three texts, more particularly dedicated to space. The spatial modification of the composition of the works is undoubtedly the original factor of the installation, its primary stake in history. In approaching Carl Andre (b. 1935)'s works from the retrospective at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2017, in *Approach to Carl Andre's sculpture with regard to a phenomenology of space and place*, **Jérôme Dussuchalle** analyses a creation that has developed since the 1960s, the “installing”, the setting up, the Heideggerian *Aufstellung*, properties of sculpture. Breaking away from Andre's categorisation as a Minimalist, the author reexamines the work through a cross between the artist's writings, his concept of “sculpture without a pedestal”, and the Heideggerian conception of space, which gives rise to the unveiling of the body as existing in the said space. Andre's famous “sculpture as place” is thus conceived in terms of kinaesthetic articulation, of “almost carnal” contact between the visitor, the materials and the space, as a system of relations and the disappearance of the mode of representation. Through this text, we understand how the birth of Installation art and a specific interest in the “exhibition”, in the

setting up of artworks in a place intersect since the installation of Andre's sculptures plays on a phenomenal off-screen, preparing and then realising the sculpture *in situ*.

In the following text, **Frédéric Herbin** examines the *Organisations d'espaces* created by the French artist Jean-Michel Sanejouand (1934-2021) between 1967 and 1974, in other words, the first installations of sculptures *in situ* in France, which, unfortunately, no longer exist except in photographic documents, and in contemporary critical writings, notably by Pierre Restany. Herbin also looks back at the artist's discourse and confronts them to the works, which allows him to grasp, in all its nuances, the transition, the shift between Sanejouand's *Objets-Charges*—sculptures made of assemblages in the early 1960s—and the artist's awareness of the exhibition space and its location. For Sanejouand, the real space, at the heart of the transition, implies the public space. Herbin convokes Michel de Certeau and his *Practice of the Everyday Life* ([1980] 2011) to better demonstrate how Sanejouand's sculpture reveals the public place. It echoes Situationism declaring that his sculpture is a counterpoint to the urban planning of the French post-war "Trente Glorieuses", or "30 Glorious Years" (1945-1975), its excesses and its ideology of compulsory progress.

It is in a seemingly more humorous mode, albeit tainted with black humour, that the American artist Mike Kelley (1954-2012)'s *Kandors* present a political critique, associating the installation with the imaginary spaces that permeate our reality. In *Near and far. On Mike Kelley's Kandors* **Charlotte Serrus** thus studies the series that the American artist devoted in the 2000s to Superman's hometown on the planet Krypton, Kandor. Kelley's installations play with multiple spaces—using a multi-media installation, with paths and screens. But also, with miniaturised and confined spaces containing the "Kandors" reduced to phallic bubbles, which Charlotte Serrus claims, act as "parables" of the conditioning of the inhabitants, their bodies and their psyche. Phenomenologically, the *Kandors* thwart the notion of Installation as an immersive space but reassert it as what intervenes physically on the bodies of the spectators through the relationships of scale, and psychologically through the incitements of memories. In his recourse to popular culture (science fiction in its Hollywood version), Kelley reinjects the imagination and memory of spaces obscured by the discourses of high culture accepted as such.

### **Part III Installation and time**

The third part contains studies of installations that use the new techniques of moving images and sound in their devices, or that involve the action of the spectator or the artist, thus adding an interactive or performative dimension. These factors generally reinforce the multisensory perception of the installation and introduce the phenomenological dimension of time.

The work examined by **Dore Bowen** in *Experiencing infrastructural time* is *Double corridor* by Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), a work in the collections of the University of San José (California). It questions, on the one hand, the architectural infrastructures and thus the space, and on the other hand implies the path taken by a moving user, as the work invites her to a temporal physical experience, disturbed by a mirror arranged in such a way that the protagonist does not see her body while moving (or perceives it as truncated). Being the curator of a re-exhibition of the work, Bowen found an unpublished archive of an interview between the artist and the critic Willoughby Sharp accompanied by numerous photographs. This discovery allows her to restore the original conditions of the installation, its emphasis on its temporal dimension and on the intersubjectivity originally proposed. To this analysis, Bowen adds the impact of the historical environment on the perception of the work between 1970 and today, between a politically agitated period in a San José “lost in time” and the current city. This allows her to develop a phenomenology of “presentism” theorised by François Hartog (2015).

Like Dore Bowen, the text of **Marie-Laure Delaporte**, *From Dan Graham's proprioceptive installations to Jesper Just's "post-cinema" walks* considers the discrepancy—and continuities—linked to the passage of time on the works. She analyses anew the series based on Dan Graham (b. 1942)'s *Time-delay* and restores the original surprise of the spectator discovering her own bodily presence simultaneously in the present and in the past. The author juxtaposes this well-known series with a study of a recent installation/exhibition by Danish artist Jesper Just (b. 1974) in the vast basement of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Both the effective simplicity of Dan Graham's installation and Just's “post-cinema” scenography displayed on giant screens create a hiatus between our history and our physical presence in front of the image. In Graham's work, the vertiginous self-perceptive primacy of the living subject emerges, while in Just the spectator's body is lost in the face of the gigantic scale of the images, the architecture of the place and the architecture represented, dissolving in opposing temporalities. The text manifests that the passage of history transforms the installation centred on the phenomenology of the living individual into a vision in which the latter is dissolved in images which technological deployment echoes the gigantic scale of the megacities. The dominant character in Just's films is the One World Trade Center, she explains.

Ann Hamilton (b. 1956)'s installations analysed by **Pascale Saarbach** in *Ann Hamilton: The conditions of attention* work on the intersubjectivity between the artist as the organiser of the device, or by her actual presence, and the viewer. Although the works cannot be qualified as theatrical, they borrow from this artistic category scenographic qualities, which, like Robert Wilson's or Romeo Castellucci's theatre of images, capture the spectator, literally embracing its

physical body. Hamilton's installations are almost always immersive. The public is enveloped in darkness, surrounded by mannequins, it hears and feels presences. In addition, scented elements, tactile materials and sounds—voice, noises that cross the space—surprise the senses. The author here makes an almost political reading of Hamilton's works. Her installations, she claims, transform the viewer's perception of space and time through an environment where she loses her footing and yet finds herself present to herself. This capturing of attention is an antidote to the post-capitalist society's hold on attention as denounced by Jonathan Crary (1999, 2013).

While Ann Hamilton's artwork willingly emphasises sounds, in *Musical installations: problematic works* musicologist **Jacques Amblard** examines the reverse: installations made by music composers that integrate other arts. The musicians John Cage and Nam June Paik have mostly inspired visual artists while in France, in the years 2000, "serious" composers, under the persistent authority of Pierre Boulez (and Stockhausen in Germany), considered installations as playful occupations, marginal suites of concrete music, made by composers seduced by pop and cultural industry. Because of this negative view, accentuated by a similar take by the musical elite on popular culture, some young composers have heralded the opposite view, engulfed into the "regressive" practice, broadcasting their installations on Youtube, the computer screen being the most efficient vector. Another strong trend, possibly mixed with playfulness, expresses a romanticism of the machine, a fascination with technology. It allows itself to play more serious music, purporting to be scholarly, "highbrow" music, with installations produced by laboratory research, legitimised by the institutions. The installations of these composers often veer on a cosmic Neo-futurism, using light effects, mirrors, crystal instruments. Other musicians try to broaden the listening experience to all parts of the body. To the critical eye of the musicologist, many of these installations are content with a somewhat naive phenomenology.

#### **Part IV Installations and Eastern philosophy of space and time**

The texts of the fourth part highlight how the Eastern concept of space as a link between the self, the collective, and nature, finds an apt expression in installations. Five authors endeavour to examine how ways of thinking the space in Japan, Korea, and China led to an appropriation of the form of installation to manifest experientially philosophical or spiritual concepts specific to these cultures: concept of emptiness as an invisible carrier of psychic energy, of resonance between the material, the social and the spiritual.

These texts insist on the material, sensory presence of space, which acts as an awakening to the continuity between our biological and cerebral life, between body and mind, a continuity which, as said before, is also essential

to phenomenology. They offer an entry into the works of artists but also into the mechanisms of a heuristic revelation of meaning, as enlightenment, Nirvana, *Satori*.

The first text, *The sense of emptiness in the art of installation of Onishi Yasuaki* by **Kim Hyeon-suk** discusses the role of the empty space in the installations of the Japanese artist (b. 1979), using lightweight material such as a black liquid adhesive (hot glue), with the support of non-material materials such as light, air or other intangible materials. She analyses a few striking examples through the prism of Taoist and Buddhist concept of emptiness as “interspace” or “space-time”—in Japanese “*ma* (間)”—i.e. a moment between two states. The characters represent a door opening, favouring a flux of air, an exchange between two spaces, a process of homeostasis. She shows how such a concept is also part of Korean and Chinese culture and related both to the Chinese Taoist concept of *qi* (氣, primordial breath) and to the Indian Buddhist concept of *sunyata*, a void that is full.

The second text untitled *Art in situ or the site as the art: A mode of Japanese reception of contemporary art* by **Uemura Hiroshi** concerns installations exhibited in rural landscapes in Japan, taking place in local art festivals. The author questions the relationships of the works to the place and the visitors, asking: what is the nature and merit of their presence in a specific location; what is the relation to the visitor's bodily presence. He argues convincingly that despite the apparent inscription of these festivals in a global aesthetic practice—that of outdoor installations art contemporary art festivals—Japanese visitors enjoy the site-specificity of the artwork because it relates to the traditional Japanese system of experiencing places known as *meisho-meguri*—i.e. “a pilgrimage to a series of famous sites” rooted in ancient religious practice. He claims that the procession of the visitor within the artistic sites participates in the same game of physical displacement to a series of religious or quasi-religious places. The grafting of one ancient practice on contemporary aesthetic experience coming from the West, thus modifies the experience. For the Japanese visitor, the encounter with the works counts less than the process of walking from one to the other.

The third text *Ikebana as an installation* by **Jacline Moriceau** also concerns Japan, more precisely the master of ikebana, Teshigahara Sōfū (1900-1979). Ikebana is the traditional Japanese art of flower composition, which she compares to the modern practice of Installation. As an installation engages the visitor in a multiple sensory, bodily, mental, interaction with space and time, “ikebana” creates an ephemeral space involving the creator, the place, and some active spectators. This intriguing text again suggests that the grafting of a contemporary practice on a traditional art permitted the extension of the latter in size and audience—the master was a well-travelled

artist—while maintaining its original significance. Conversely, the art of ikebana brought to Installation art a possible otherworldly meaning—that of linking the living and the dead.

The fourth text, *The meditative space in the sound installation of Kim Kichul* by **Park Hye-Jun**, concerns a contemporary Korean artist, born in 1969. Deeply involved in the practice of Buddhism and devoted in particular to the Bodhisattva of compassion, Gwan-eum (觀音) (Guān Yīn in Chinese), Kim Kichul, who started as a sculptor, came to make installations that claim to sculpt the sound. His installations endeavour to make visible, and physical, the sound of a bell, of rain, of trees, associated with places of worships and with meditation. The contemporary vocabulary of installations, and of technology, serves to manifest a space that is both in and out of the visitor. The sound creates this communication and imposes on the real a quality of spiritual wellbeing. The author's precise phenomenological descriptions help the global reader recreate for herself, the peculiar, intangible, yet sensory experience.

The fifth and last text regarding *The installations of the Chinese artist Xu Bing: The invisible space of language* by **Marie Laureillard**, argues that Xu Bing (b. 1955)'s aim is to restore communication beyond language, at a global level. In his *Book from the Sky* (1987-1991), *The Living Word* (2001) or *Book from the Ground* (2003-2019) the artist shows defiance for language as creating an invisible barrier between body and mind. Yet his installations, which material is language, betray a belief in the sensorial impact of immersing the spectator in a “word-space”, the space of the Chinese language made global, or the space of emojis. This space is in our mind, as well as in our language-saturated environment. The works appear as a site of tangency between the here / the tangible and the inside / the intangible.

### Thank you note

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# Part III:

## Installation and time

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# III.1 Their porous body: on Bruce Nauman's *San Jose Installation*: Infrastructure and the experience of time

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**Abstract:** Bruce Nauman's (b. 1941) installed *Corridor Installation with Mirror—San Jose Installation (Double-Wedge Corridor with Mirror)* in 1970 at San José State College in northern California.<sup>2</sup> Using documents discovered during the reinstallation of this work in 2018, the author argues that Nauman's *San Jose Installation* draws upon the participant's experience of the surrounding infrastructure—which, in 1970, included modern campus buildings with corridors and plazas, as well as the student protests that took place there. This argument opposes the widely held belief that this installation was created solely by the artist and results in a purely internal journey, a view supported by Nauman's statements to curator Willoughby Sharp in a 1970 interview, as well as the photographs that accompany the published interview. The author argues, on the contrary, that this installation draws upon infrastructure and a collective experience of time—notably, in the 1970s, a sense of a dead-end future in light of the country's failed Vietnam agenda and domestic racial problems. The essay concludes by examining a VR

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is refigured and condensed from my text in *Bruce Nauman: Spatial encounters*, co-authored with Constance M. Lewallen, University of California Press, 2019. Thank you to editor Nadine Little at UC press for permission to reproduce sections from the book for this essay. Thank you to Langarts for hosting a workshop in 2017 on Phenomenology and installation at the Sorbonne, which provided a forum to discuss this project with other scholars, with particular thanks to Christine Vial-Kayser for her editorial comments.

<sup>2</sup> San José State is the given name of San José State University, located in the town of San José, California. Nauman spells his installation "San Jose", instead of "San José".

interpretation of Nauman's installation and considers what this suggests about the current infrastructure and experience of time.

**Keywords:** Bruce Nauman, installation, reinstallation, post-Minimalism, experience, infrastructure, time, modern architecture.

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**Fig. III.1-1; Fig. III.1-2** Stills from Willoughby Sharp, *Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 1970*; videotape, black-and-white, 46 min. Courtesy San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.



**Fig. III.1-3** Stills from Willoughby Sharp, *Interview with Bruce Nauman*, May 1970; videotape, black-and-white, 46 min. Courtesy San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Two men sit across from one another in swivel chairs situated on a platform in a college television studio. Willoughby Sharp, on the left, is interviewing twenty-nine-year-old American artist Bruce Nauman in conjunction with his installation in the Art Department gallery. Sharp's casual appearance—his foot hangs over the stage, and his hair is long and unkempt—belies his ambition (fig. III.1-1). The thirty-four-year-old New York-based performer, art writer, and curator recently co-founded *Avalanche* magazine to place the public eye on innovative artists rather than critics and galleries.<sup>3</sup> Sharp's first issue of the magazine, published in fall 1970, will feature German artist Joseph Beuys. Sharp's interview with Nauman will be transcribed and featured in the second, published in winter 1971.<sup>4</sup>

Onscreen, Sharp laughs nervously as he turns to Nauman: "I wonder, what can you say about that room?" Nauman looks down, and his response is telling: "Not very much. It seems like it's very much a one-person piece". At

<sup>3</sup> Co-founded with Liza Béar, *Avalanche* magazine was published from 1970-1976 and produced thirteen issues. (See Balmer, 2011, pp. 21-26.)

<sup>4</sup> See Sharp (1971, pp. 22-35), republished in Kraynak (2003). In an interview, Sharp states that the first issue of *Avalanche* was published six months after his interview with Nauman at San José State in May 1970 (Bellini, 2007).

this point in the video, a grating sound drowns out the two voices while the image track breaks away from the men on stage to a closely cropped black-and-white photograph of Nauman's hand operating an electric saw (fig. III.1-2). The image track scrolls through forty such photographs depicting the artist and others constructing the installation in the gallery (fig. III.1-3) while the interview continues on the soundtrack. After this slide show, the image track resynchronizes with the interview taking place on stage for the remainder of the video.

This interview was recorded on 2-inch videotape in the broadcast studio at San José State College on 7 May 1970—the same week Nauman installed his *Corridor Installation with Mirror—San José Installation (Double-Wedge Corridor with Mirror)* in the gallery,<sup>5</sup> yet the location of this primary document was unknown until I found it languishing on a shelf in the University library. After digitizing it, and then viewing it numerous times, it became apparent that significant parts are missing from the interview as it was transcribed and published in *Avalanche* magazine in 1971. The publication of the interview, the primary means by which this corridor is remembered today, features none of the black-and-white stills of the installation's construction included in the video, and sections of the dialogue are missing as well, including the opening dialogue cited above. Nor would there be an attempt on the part of the magazine editors to express the rhythm or tone of the interview—the distress in the critic's voice or the artist's unhurried responses—through ellipses or descriptive inserts. In fact, Sharp's name does not appear at all—an intentional omission on the part of the magazine employed in order to place the reader's attention squarely on the artist.<sup>6</sup> The black-and-white photographs by Italian photographer Gianfranco Gorgoni, which accompany the interview in *Avalanche*, support the impression that Nauman installed the corridor in near-isolation in a studio-

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<sup>5</sup> Willoughby Sharp explains, "I did my first Videoview in May 1970, six months before *Avalanche* was first published. It was with Bruce Nauman who I had previously interviewed for the cover article in *Arts Magazine*. Bruce was working on a V-shaped corridor piece at San Diego State College [sic], and the College's TV studio hired me to interview Bruce" (Bellini 2007). This video is a part of a series of video interviews by Sharp, which he titled "Videoviews", a number of which were recorded at San José State College (later University). These include, aside from his interview with Nauman in May 1970, Van Schley on March 22–23, 1973, later published in *Avalanche* (Winter/Spring 1973), and Chris Burden on 23 May 1973.

<sup>6</sup> According to his wife, Pamela Seymour Smith Sharp. Unpublished phone interview with the author on 28 April 2017.

like environment. And in the interview, Nauman's suggest that the corridor is equally isolating. It is, he states, a one-person piece.

My interest in this installation was prompted by my serving as lead curator for the 2018 reinstallation of Nauman's Corridor at San José State University in the Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery—the campus gallery where it was first installed, and which, except for the gallery title and floor tile, remains exactly as it was in 1970 (fig. III.1-4).<sup>7</sup>



**Fig. III.1-4** Bruce Nauman, *Corridor Installation with Mirror – San Jose Installation (Double Wedge Corridor with Mirror)*, 1970-74. Wallboard and mirror, dimensions variable, 3.05 x 8.53 x 1.83 m (10 x 28 x 6 ft.). Installation view: Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery, San José State University, 2018. Photo: Dore Bowen. Courtesy Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery, San José State University. © 2021 Bruce Nauman / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

The newly discovered materials pertaining to the original installation—notably, the video interview, contact sheets by Gorgoni, as well as participant testimonies—prove that this corridor was constructed and installed as a collective project, with Nauman's friends, colleagues, and students in an Art Department gallery on a college campus, and the installation, I contend, draws upon these collective elements. Although many questions remain unanswered, the documents discovered while conducting this research correct the belief that this corridor, and Nauman's work in general, is, at base, narcissistic and self-

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<sup>7</sup> I functioned as lead curator for a team that included San José State professor emeritus Tony May and artist Keith Daly, with curator Constance M. Lewallen as consultant. Titled *Time Tunnel: Bruce Nauman's Corridor Installation with Mirror—San Jose Installation*, the reinstallation was displayed 30 January–23 February 2018 in the Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery at San José State (in the same gallery where Nauman installed this work in 1970). A virtual reality version of Nauman's installation was included in the exhibition. See the exhibition catalogue *Time Tunnel: Bruce Nauman's* (2019).

referential.<sup>8</sup> This idea, supported by the *Avalanche* publication, was first put forth by critic Robert Pincus-Witten in his review of Nauman's first New York solo exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery in 1968. While Nauman's early work interrogates the dimensions of his body, and while his installations demand engagement from the participant, I disagree that his work is consequently a form of "infantile narcissism", as Pincus-Witten puts it.<sup>9</sup>

On the contrary, this corridor installation infers a network of buildings with corridors—buildings that open onto galleries, plazas, as well as the events that occurred in these spaces. This functional network is what we now call *infrastructure*.<sup>10</sup> In its boundlessness and background operation, infrastructure is hard to define. A simple definition includes the basic physical and organizational structures and needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.<sup>11</sup> This includes corridors, roads, airports, dams, and water mains, but also radio transmitters and electrical grids, and, more recently, cyberinfrastructure (Atkinson et al., 2016). As well, infrastructure includes human actors: the administrators, technicians, and salespeople who make the institutional supply lines operative. Sharp's comments during his interview with the artist, as well as his strong reaction to Nauman's statement that the corridor is a "one-person piece", suggests that he

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<sup>8</sup> It must be noted that Nauman would reject the implication of authenticity suggested by the term "reinstallation", as he does not intend his architectural installations to be unique art objects, nor does he consider them bound to a particular site. Rather, they are approximations of a concept. His installations cannot be reinstalled for the simple reason that the first installation is not the original but only the first instantiation of the work. An approximate duplication of the first installation is equally impossible because the nature of time prohibits it; as we know, nothing stays the same. Although Juliet Myers, Nauman's longtime studio manager, calls subsequent installations fabrications, I am using the term reinstallation precisely to prompt questions pertaining to authenticity, to site, and to the myth of originality.

<sup>9</sup> Writing of Nauman's fibreglass pieces, Robert Pincus-Witten continues: "So too am I offended by the infantile narcissism and possessiveness that appears to have crept into Nauman's more recent productions." (Pincus-Witten, 1968, pp. 63-65). In a later essay, Rosalind Krauss discusses Nauman, amongst a group of artists, that use the "performance for the monitor" to create a sense of a collapsed present, and, in some cases, a "bracketing-out the world" (Krauss, 1976, pp. 54-55).

<sup>10</sup> Felicity D. Scott uses the term techno-social apparatus similarly to the way I am applying an expanded notion of infrastructure—to extend a psychological reading of Nauman's architectural installations by insisting on their relation to the social-political order. (Scott, 2018, p. 190).

<sup>11</sup> Merriam-Webster, s.v. "infrastructure", accessed 1 July 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/infrastructure>.

experienced the corridor infrastructurally—as opening from his porous body onto other spaces and times.

Extending this argument, Nauman's *San Jose Installation* affords the participant a collective experience of time that draws upon infrastructure. Nauman thought of his corridors in temporal terms, and, indeed, all corridors create a journey for a subject who passes from point A, to point B, to some future point C, up ahead. However, Nauman plays with this structure, and in *San Jose Installation*, the intersection of the two corridors creates a temporal collision of two such trajectories, thereby giving the participant inside the sense that time, too, branches out and intersects other forms. The mirror at the apex of the two corridors further scrambles the participant's trajectory in the corridor, creating ghostly reflections at the wedged intersection. As in Nauman's other architectural installations from this time, such as his 1970 *Corridor Installation (Nick Wilder Installation)*, which features five corridors, time becomes textured, and the participant is stalled within a maze of corridors leading to mysterious, and often inaccessible, rooms. This, of course, suggests that the corridor exists in an architectural but also psychological web, which ultimately places the infrastructure of the site in question.

### ***San Jose Installation, San José, CA, May 1970***

As Sharp notes in his 1970 video interview with Nauman, when a participant first enters *San Jose Installation* they see a reflection of the corridor empty in the mirror, lending the illusion that the corridor extends past its architectural endpoint, to infinity, but without the participant. This reflection of an empty path leading to a bright point on the horizon creates a sense of futurity, suggesting that something hopeful lies ahead, but it also gives the eerie sense that this bright future lacks the very person who sees it. In a preparatory drawing by Nauman, created for *San Jose Installation* the same year, the architecture of the corridor is drawn in lead pencil, while the mirror's illusory reflection of the corridor extending in space is drawn in red pen.<sup>12</sup> The reflection of the corridor extending in space is produced by the tilt of the mirror, which actually reflects the adjacent corridor. Art critic Michael Auping writes of his experience of this reflection, noting that upon entering it, the corridor “appears as one extraordinarily long shaft, long enough that you question whether you wanted to go any further.” (Auping,

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<sup>12</sup> Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Study for Corridor Installation with Mirror—San Jose Installation (Double Wedge Corridor with Mirror) “walls—8” high”*, 1970; graphite and felt-tipped pen on paper, 58 x 74 cm (23 x 29 in). See van Bruggen, 1986, drawing no 141.

2011, p. 98). Despite the open view, because the corridor narrows appreciably toward its far end, and because the participant does not see himself or herself reflected in the mirror, there is an increasing sense of confinement, accentuated by the change in pressure. As Auping suggests, this produces anxiety and doubts about where, in fact, the illusion of the unending corridor is leading, i.e. death, or to another time/space dimension, or both. However, thought in terms of the idea of futurity and progress, this unending view is also a lure, beckoning the participant to follow the corridor into a mysterious future.

A second reflection in the mirror occurs when a second participant enters the corridor adjacent to the participant (the second corridor in the double-wedge), giving the first participant an image of a stranger where he or she ought to be in the mirror. The trick ensues because the mirror at the apex of the two corridors is tilted, and thus reflects the adjacent corridor rather than the participant's corridor (and hence the view of the extraordinarily long and empty corridor when the adjacent corridor is empty). Artist Bernard Borgeaud discusses his experience of this reflection when reviewing this installation at the Ileana Sonnabend Gallery in Paris, a year after the San José installation. Borgeaud first sees in the mirror a reflection of an empty corridor extending in space past its architectural endpoint (the first reflection described above), as did Sharp and others, but quickly adds that he then sees "in the mirror an image of another spectator in the other corridor, all the while realizing they are doing the same thing" (Borgeaud, 1971, p. 50).<sup>13</sup> Borgeaud must have been in the corridor when another participant entered the adjacent corridor, and thus the initial reflection of the corridor extending in space was transformed into a reflection of a stranger. As opposed to the first reflection, which connotes futurity (and the mystery, hopes, and doubts attached to the future), this reflection invokes the Borgesian experience of parallel times and parallel selves, the idea that someone somewhere is "doing the same thing".

Lastly, the corridor produces a third reflection, which Sharp describes as the most shocking of all. In his interview with Nauman, Sharp states that as he

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<sup>13</sup> This essay is the first record of this second installation of *Corridor Installation with Mirror - San Jose Installation* at the Ileana Sonnabend Gallery in Paris, May 1971, and corrects the citation in the Whitney/LACMA catalogue, which places the Paris installation as occurring in 1970, prior to the San José installation. In the Walker Catalogue Raisonné, this Paris exhibition is not cited. From Borgeaud's review (1971) we know that *Corridor Installation with Mirror* (which he describes without the title) and *Parallax Room with Three Horizontal Bars*, 1971, were exhibited together in Paris in May 1971.

walks toward the apex of the corridor, he sees himself approaching in the mirror. This sight was alarming for Sharp since the mirror was hung in such a way that it reflected his body without his head, and he remarks that “the shock of seeing myself headless was a strong part of the piece.” (Sharp, 1971, p. 24).<sup>14</sup> This reflection of the participant walking in the corridor, thought in terms of time, suggests that there is an end to time, which is when the perceiving self can no longer recognize itself.

This interpretation of the installation as producing an experience of space as time is supported by Gorgoni’s photographs accompanying the *Avalanche* interview, which focus on the artist, who is seen experimenting with his own body (looking at his reflection in the mirror, evaluating the angle of view in the corridor, etc.) as if testing the various perceptual experiences on himself before incorporating the mirror into the installation. Yet, while Gorgoni shot hundreds of photographs the first week of May 1970 in the gallery at San José State, only ten accompany the interview published in *Avalanche*. As opposed to the published images, Gorgoni’s contact sheets, consisting of over five hundred frames, help us understand that Nauman did not build the installation entirely alone, nor did he spend most of his time alone with the installation in the gallery conducting phenomenological experiments on himself. Like the stills embedded in the video interview, the contact sheets show that the construction of *San Jose Installation*, while directed by Nauman, was a collective project; while some frames show a line of faculty erecting the corridor, others show Nauman and Sharp in the broadcast studio, and still, others depict Nauman off-campus, in a hardware store.

Nauman placed the installation in the gallery in such a way that this connection to the surroundings was suggested. A drawing sketched by Nauman during or immediately after the installation at San José State College in May 1970 is hand-titled *San Jose Installation* (and, taking my cue from this drawing, I refer to this work as such—*San Jose Installation*). Unlike his two prior drawings, which depict the corridor floating in an undefined space, and two later drawings, which Nauman would sketch or modify for the work’s purchase by Giuseppe Panza in 1973, it depicts one side of the installation’s corridor flanking the gallery wall with its apex tucked into the corner of the room.<sup>15</sup> In this drawing of the corridor snug against the wall, its height

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<sup>14</sup> In this interview, Nauman explains that although he modelled the corridor in his studio prior to its installation, he adjusted the mirror in the gallery to a height of 167,7 cm (5 ½ feet) to produce the desired effect (while acknowledging that, of course, this effect would only work for a participant of his size).

<sup>15</sup> Confirmed by Bruce Nauman in discussion with Constance Lewallen, 5 April 2017.

extends fully to that of the gallery's twelve-foot ceiling, creating a seamless insertion into the space. Nevertheless, similar to the manner in which Nauman propped a fibreglass shaft against a gallery wall in his early sculptural works, *San Jose Installation* is wedged into the gallery without fusing with it entirely. It touches the gallery walls, which touch, on the far side of the walls, a similarly constructed corridor. The latter runs like a spine through a building that opens onto a suburban—a typically Californian form of sprawling-built environment—college campus located in San José, California, a city where inexpensive living communities were in the process of being built with the same materials Nauman used for his corridor—sheetrock and two-by-four boards.

### San José in the 1970s

If this installation pertains to its infrastructure, what exactly was the infrastructure in San José, California, in 1970? At the time of Nauman's installation, San José was becoming suburban but was primarily known for its agriculture, despite the fact that IBM had bought up farmland in 1954 to establish its headquarters there, it was not until the 1980s that technology would overtake agriculture as the primary source of income (Rice et al., 2012, p. 527).<sup>16</sup> Just an hour's drive south of San Francisco and Berkeley, San José in 1970 held neither the unconventional attitude of its northern neighbours nor the showy persona of Los Angeles to its south. A place easy to overlook, it was famous for representing the past rather than the future. In 1968 "Do you know the way to San José" was released—a popular song that described San José as a city hopelessly lost in the past. The song tells the story of an aspiring actress who returns to her hometown of San José after a failed move to Los Angeles. With music by Burt Bacharach, lyrics by Hal David, and sung by Dionne Warwick (David, 2016), it made San José famous for not being Los Angeles—that place where "all the stars that never were are parking cars and pumping gas."<sup>17</sup> Behind the lauding of San José (peace of mind, air you can breathe), the song suggests that San José is the place one goes after the future fizzles and dreams bust. This was San José in the popular imagination at the time of Nauman's installation.

In contrast to the popular image of San José as a city lost in time, the Art Department at the state college experienced a renaissance of activity

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<sup>16</sup> Also see Thoreau n.d., "San Jose case study, Part One: The urban-growth boundary", San Jose case study, accessed 1 July 2020, <http://www.ti.org/vaupdate31.html#Grow>.

<sup>17</sup> Burt Bacharach wrote the music for "Do You Know the Way to San José" with lyrics by Hal David. Dionne Warwick recorded it in 1968.

beginning in the 1960s. For example, the 1966 campus residency of architect Buckminster Fuller drew an enthusiastic response from students and faculty, and the department invited Fuller, as well as a long list of experimental artists and thinkers, to lecture and teach.<sup>18</sup> Strangely, few members of the current faculty remember Fuller, or Nauman's seminal installation, or any of the experimental artists who visited and taught there, as if somewhere along the way the department lost its connection with itself.<sup>19</sup> This vital period of artistic activity in the department was accentuated by political events on campus. In 1970, as on other college campuses at the time, students and faculty channelled their anger into protesting the escalation of US involvement in the Vietnam War, and the concurrent anger about the White and European biases in American culture and education (fig. III.1-5). Protests crescendoed the week of Nauman's installation after the invasion of Cambodia was announced on television by President Richard Nixon on 30 April 1970. Earlier that year, in February, a college publication by President Robert D. Clark titled *The College Crisis*—transcribed from a speech Clark gave to the Assembly Committee on Education—sympathetically explained the reasons for the unrest at the college with accompanying photographs depicting the campus overrun by protest (Clark, 1970, np).

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<sup>18</sup> The front page of the *Spartan Daily* from 31 March 1966 includes a picture of Fuller with the caption "R. Buckminster Fuller, 70-year-old architect, inventor, engineer, poet, philosopher and mathematician leaves SJS today after an eight-week-in-residency here. During his two-month stay, the geodesic dome inventor gave 210 hours of formal lectures to students and surrounding community organizations." (*Spartan Daily* 31 March 1966, front page).

<sup>19</sup> Artists who visited, presented, taught, or exhibited at San José State University in the 1970s include: Howard Fried, Vija Clemens, Chris Burden, Christo and Jeanne Claude (speaking on *Running Fence*, circa 1976), Lynda Benglis, Roy De Forest, George Herms, Helen and Newton Harrison, Tom Marioni, Bonnie Sherk, John Baldessari, Alexis Smith, Barbara T. Smith, Robert Kinmont, Robert Irwin, Ann Hamilton, Robert Crumb, Terry Zwigoff, Don Reitz, David Hockney, Robert Hudson, Richard Shaw, William Wiley, Buster Simpson, David Gilhooly, Alison Knowles, and Paul Kos. Bruce Conner taught there, as did Sherrie Levine. Writers and thinkers who presented in the department or college include Buckminster Fuller, Timothy Leary and Alan Watts (regular lectures for a semester). This list was supplied by Tony May, with additions by Constance Lewallen and the author.



**Fig. III.1-5** *Protest at San José State College.* Photograph taken at the college Survival Faire, 16-20 February 1970. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

These growing tensions on the campus, which eventually led to Clark's resignation, as well as that of the subsequent acting president, were accentuated by the shooting of student protestors by Ohio National Guardsmen at Kent State University on 4 May, an event that occurred the very week Nauman installed his corridor. The *Spartan Daily*, the San José State campus newspaper, reports that memorials were erected on campus the first week of May for the Kent State victims, in addition to ongoing protests against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the lack of programs addressing historically underserved populations, an issue raised in 1968 when two San José State athletes, Tommy Smith and John Carlos, famously made international news at

the Kent State shootings occurred), “It’s time to wake up. It’s time to get together.” (*Spartan Daily* 4 May 1970, p. 2).

### San Jose Installation, San José, CA, 2018

As art historian Pamela Lee argues, artists in the 1960s wrestled with anxieties about time, what she calls “chronophobia”, generated primarily by ambivalence surrounding technology (Lee, 2004). *San Jose Installation* was installed in 1970 at the very site where many of the technological innovations that would change the perception of time and space were in the process of being developed. In 1970 five of the seven largest US semiconductor manufacturers were already located in the San José area, now known as Silicon Valley, and Xerox opened its Palo Alto “Research Park” (Scaruffi, 2016, online). As noted above, the first week of May 1970, when Nauman’s corridor was installed, was a watershed moment as the Vietnam War turned a corner with President Nixon’s campaign into Cambodia. While *San Jose Installation* seems strangely set apart from the events of its time and place, it does provide an encounter with an experience of time that is a half-century old. 1970 marks a threshold and end of the post-World War II era in the United States. In 1970 most Americans experienced time in terms of the relative peace that ensued after WWII but added to this was anxiety produced by the cold war, symbolized by the “race in space”, with its emphasis on technological superiority and neoliberal economics (Schulman, 2001, p. 4).

In the conclusion to her study of the corridor in early modern American fiction, scholar Kate Marshall argues that rather than promising a passage to a hopeful future the late-modern corridor, our corridor, “travels and looks back at itself. What it sees is a vector, a network, or a lateral movement, or perhaps what Bruce Nauman visualizes in *Live-Taped Video Corridor*.” (Marshall, 2013, pp. 180-181). What Marshall finds illustrative about Nauman’s corridor is the way it, the corridor, surveils itself by turning inward (Ibid.). Likewise, François Hartog describes a self-reflexive shift in the Western experience of time. In his account, the focus on the present distinguishes our moment, the early twenty-first century, from the period in which Nauman installed *San Jose Installation*. Accordingly, the future has lost its allure, particularly for Europeans and North Americans, and Hartog names this condition *presentism* to distinguish it from the Futurism of the twentieth century. This, however, does not entirely preclude a sense of the past or future, since, as Hartog explains, “we are always looking both backwards and forwards, but without ever leaving this present that we have made into the limits of our world” (Hartog, 2015, p. 203).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> According to Hartog, before the French Revolution, the past was seen as informing the present. In the modern era—roughly from 1789 to 1989—the present and past were seen in terms of the future. Hartog claims that “presentism” names our current experience of time.

This emphasis on the present moment means that the architectural corridor, with its suggestion of forward movement, may be outdated, while Nauman's altered *San Jose Installation*, with its inherent challenge to the idea of progress, may have finally arrived. As noted, the installation uses a mirror to create a self-reflexive scenario while also giving the participant a taste of what it feels like to be stalled between the modern corridor, with its dream of an open future, represented by an empty and unending passageway, and the late-modern corridor, with its confrontational self-reflexivity. And this contrast between an open and a shut future was certainly expressed by those protesting outside the gallery on the campus plaza. However, it is perhaps the second reflection in *San Jose Installation*—the least discussed by critics, as well as the least likely to occur since it depends on the chance participation of a second person in the adjacent corridor—that is most relevant to the current experience of time. With this reflection in the mirror, the participant experiences parallel times, co-presence, a ghostly and simultaneous association with others. Although, as Borgeaud notes in his account of the corridor, this reflection curiously decentres the viewer, it is the least theorized in the published documents on this installation. Perhaps, in 1970, this could not be seen as the startling reflection that it appears to be today, more startling than being “up against yourself” or looking down an unending and empty corridor. Yet, in hindsight, it is obvious why this de-centring reflection is overlooked in most published accounts of the installation: it militates against the metaphor of the corridor as a personal journey created by an artist for a participant, and in doing so references what I am calling infrastructure. Infrastructure is public, opaque, and tedious. “Infrastructure is boring”, write the editors of a journal on this topic, “because, unlike the commodities whose production and consumption it facilitates, it ‘is the object of no one’s desire ... it is neglected because it belongs to the public domain’” (Rubenstein et al., 2015, p. 577). At the same time, the authors note that while infrastructure is nearly impossible to pinpoint there is “a smell of infrastructure”, which may, in fact, constitute “an alternative mode of sensory awareness.” (Ibid., p. 578)

Perhaps it was this alternative mode of sensory awareness that Sharp detected in Nauman's corridor and sought an explanation for from the artist. Shaking himself from his initial shock, Sharp turns to Nauman in the 1970 video: “I wonder, what can you say about that room?” Although Sharp did not enter a room, the corridor may have felt like it was leading somewhere, opening onto a new world. Sharp was interested in the future, particularly the future of the art world, and he saw technology as something that would aid in art's development and distribution. His videotaped interview with Nauman in the San José

broadcast studio was the first of a series of videos with artists, a number of which were taped at the college”.<sup>22</sup> His final comments to Nauman concern this topic: “It seems to me that one of the reasons for working with videotape is that the work can get out to far more people so that obviously CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] ....” To which Nauman responds, “I’m not interested in making compromises to do that.” The curator and artist clearly held different views concerning art’s relationship to technology and its infrastructure.

Yet, Sharp’s sense that this installation symbolized the future was complicated by his experience inside it. Although he would have seen an open space extending uninterrupted into a forward “room”, this view was, as he explains, rudely interrupted by his headless reflection in the mirror. And all of this occurred in an increasingly cramped space as he walked down the corridor. While he thrilled to the experience, Sharp clearly sensed what was being gambled—namely, the loss of orientation on a shared temporal map through the introduction of the disturbing idea that forward may not necessarily be the way to go. Perhaps Sharp was troubled by the idea that the modern subject would not be able to complete the journey into its promised future. Sharp’s statements concerning the corridor give texture to his claim that art ought to leave the gallery and enter the world promised by communication technology, while Nauman’s statements betray his ambivalence about this prospect. These contrasting attitudes toward the future come into focus a half-century later, when artists’ preoccupation with their own bodily and psychological reactions seems dated, as do corridors.

The modern subject has changed, as has its relationship to the institutions formerly housed by buildings with corridors. The reinstallation of *San Jose Installation* highlights the fact that technological and economic forces in Silicon Valley, now the centre of a digital revolution, have made corridors, and other linear forms, nearly obsolete. Accordingly, the 2018 exhibition also included a Virtual Reality corridor based on Nauman’s specifications for *San Jose Installation*—designed and built by students at San José State University and directed by faculty members (fig. III.1-6). This VR installation was aptly placed in a separate gallery across a corridor from the reinstallation, thus linking the installation and its digital interpretation via a corridor, the very form Nauman’s installation interrogates (Blanton & Holberton, 2019, pp. 91-105).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> According to his wife, Pamela Seymour Smith Sharp. Unpublished phone interview with the author on 28 April 2017. Also see footnote 5.

<sup>23</sup> Participating students included SJSU graduate student team leader Roya Ebtehaj, with students Kevin Minh Nguyen, Cassidy Pong, Tyler Stannard, Michelle Tam, and Don Vo, advised by Assistant Professors Andrew Blanton and Rhonda Holberton.



**Fig. III.1-6** Virtual Reality interpretation of Bruce Nauman, *Corridor Installation with Mirror – San Jose Installation (Double Wedge Corridor with Mirror)*, 1970. San José State University, 2018. Designed by San José State students, directed by faculty Andrew Blanton and Rhonda Holberton. Photographer Dore Bowen. Permission courtesy of the Natalie and James Thompson Gallery.

If, as I have argued, Nauman's sheet rock and two-by-four installation rely upon infrastructure for its experiential impact, how does the VR replica of Nauman's corridor function in relation to infrastructure? When the participant donned the headset, they found themselves immediately placed in a simulated version of Nauman's installation; yet, instead of seeing a mirror reflection, with light emanating from the entryway, the participant saw a digital image stitched together from numerous views constructed from images of the corridor as seen from the apex. The shine was gone, as well as the inherent relationship to the participant's viewing body. And when approaching the apex of the VR corridor, the figure reflected in the mirror was not that of the participant, only a flat disc.

The most interesting part of the journey down the VR corridor was the moment when the participant inevitably walked through the mirror at the apex and discovered a duplicate space on the other side of it, one that mirrored the corridor inversely. In an email exchange, Professor Holberton explains that this "mirrored world" was literally "a duplicate of the 3D world

the VR user would be navigating” (Holberton, 2019, n.p.).<sup>24</sup> Thus, in the VR installation, the mirror, rather than serving as a portal to an alien world, becomes a threshold to the same; “up ahead” becomes simply an inversion of “here now”, confirming that, as Hartog claims, the current experience of time is that of a continuous present. The VR version of the corridor thereby shifted the experience of time away from reflections on the past and future towards a timelessness based on repetition—a perfect expression of the corridor’s current digital infrastructure.

Nauman’s installation relies upon modern notions of time and space, more so than its VR double, and the artist relishes the anxiety-producing ellipses this poses. “My definition of anxiety is the gap between the now and the later.... We have no future if we fill this void, we only have sameness”, he said in an interview recorded in 1995 (Jones, 2002, p. 229). Indeed, the yawning gaps between here, now, and later is a consistent theme in his work, and *San Jose Installation* exploits these gaps even further by forcing the participant to navigate both spatial and felt space, what Nauman calls the work’s “imaginary centres.”<sup>25</sup> The VR corridor, by contrast, fills up these gaps with uniformity by repeating and inverting data. Yet, if Hartog’s theory of presentism is accurate, might the VR installation be a more appropriate expression of our moment, more appropriate than the “real” *San Jose Installation*? And, if so, does the reinstallation of the “real” installation make sense as anything other than a monument to experience in a bygone era?

This would indeed be the case if infrastructure had transformed entirely since 1970. It has not. The fact that the gallery at San José State University is preserved, almost exactly as it was in 1970, is surely evidence of this. While the Art Department’s gallery has garnered an endowment and a name, and the college has grown to a university, and the region around the university has become a hub for technological innovation, the infrastructure of San José State is still a brick-and-mortar institution where instructors push video—yes, video—carts down corridors. Many others walk down twentieth-century corridors, even today after open-plan architecture has dismantled the ideas that support these corridors. Consequently, it is more accurate to say that within the current infrastructure and its experience of time, there exist pockets of this previous infrastructure, pertaining to a prior experience of time. The reinstallation of *San Jose Installation*, both “real” and “virtual”,

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<sup>24</sup> Unpublished email by Rhonda Holberton to the author, 4 Jan 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Nauman uses this phrase in his text for *Performance Parallelogram* (1970-71), a work that, like *San Jose Installation*, entails a performer’s movement to and away from mirrors (quoted in Simon, 1994, no. 207, p. 254).

affords the contemporary gallerygoer an appreciation of the site's still intact infrastructure as this contrasts with the emerging technological environment, permitting a fleeting reflection of the future the twentieth century foresaw.

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