

An Investigation into Installation Art, Film and Perceptions of Time

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I declare that this **Critical Cultures Research Project** is all my own work and that all sources have been fully acknowledged.

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Introduction

The way in which we experience the world around us is fundamentally linked with time. It is an intangible construct of which humans have developed a cyclical understanding as a way of relating ourselves to our surroundings. Throughout life, the time we live is tracked - what date it is, how old we are, whether we are on time or late. However, time does not pass in the same way, in the same moment, for everyone. The perception of time can differ from one person to the next and depends on a variety of factors. How are we affected when we are in an environment where time feels suspended - like a dark pub at 11 am that encourages those inside to drink despite the morning sun shining outside? How does a space create this absence in our awareness of time regardless of our societal conditioning to be intrinsically connected to measuring its passing? In exhibition spaces and galleries many elements of the space influence how long we spend there and in turn, how long we spend engaging with specific artworks. Does the way in which we relate to the space and the artwork alter how quickly or slowly time passes for us in this environment? Even if the work doesn't directly address themes of time, can the way in which it is created and presented to the viewer impact their perception of temporality?

This research project will discuss the relationship between interaction with art, film and installation spaces and a spectator's perception of time. The following chapters will examine how the media through which the work is presented affects how time passes in relation to the viewer as well as discussing how specific techniques that artists employ can influence how time is perceived. Chapter One will consider the concepts of both the centralised and decentralised viewer in relation, respectively, to painting and the film camera. This will allow for a discussion about the impact that either centralising or decentralising has on time. It will also address ideas of lived time and the presentation of the 'meaningful moment'. Chapter Two will consider how the use of real time shots in film can cause time to seemingly pass slowly. This will be discussed through the analysis of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) and Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010). Of these examples, one is a film screened outside of a gallery setting and the other is made to be shown in a gallery setting. While they were not intended to be presented in the same setting when created,

both works were selected as they highlight time's passing to the viewer through their medium. Chapter Three will examine the relationship between accelerated time perception and immersive installation spaces through the artworks of Ann Hamilton and Yayoi Kusama. This chapter presents a discussion around embodied viewing, space and time and flow psychology. Each chapter is concerned with establishing a link between art and space and how the viewer perceives time.

Time is a subject that has been written about and theorised extensively. For the purposes of this research paper many of the theorists referenced have written about both art and time and their relationship with one another. Christine Ross is an art historian and scholar who discusses the role of temporality in relation to art, referring to different artworks through her analysis of time. Gilles Deleuze's work *Cinema 2* creates the basis for some of the discussion around time, film and duration while Laura Mulvey's work explores the role of spectatorship and film. Mulvey specifically discusses the use of stillness and moving image which in turn lends itself to the presentation of time. Some other prominent authors referenced in the text include Claire Bishop, Philip Rawson and John Berger - each of whom have written texts that relate to art and perception. In relation to Kusama's work some first hand accounts from visitors to the installation in IMMA have been recorded and referenced in order to form a well rounded and considered argument.

Chapter 1: The Decentralised Viewer

Time is often understood to be a phenomenon that is collectively experienced. Humans are intrinsically connected to its passing. In Westernised cultures it is measured in cycles while simultaneously being presented as a linear concept - something that leads from one event to another and has a focused trajectory. However, time perception by its very definition is subjective. The individual's relationship with time passing can be influenced by a number of factors. In *The Past is the Present; It's the Future Too* Christine Ross discusses this personal experience in relation to temporality saying:

...temporal passing is most often experienced in distorted ways; that time does not universally pass at the same rhythm for different social groups; that temporal passing is often messed up with emotional knots, inversions, and denegations; that it can be experienced as unproductive and leading to loss; that the spread of the internet...has compressed it; that temporal passing might simply be an illusion, or that it is unreachable as an objective reality.

(2012, pp. 6-7)

The way in which the spectator experiences art is dictated by time. In the most fundamental way, access to the gallery or exhibition space is limited by opening and closing times as well as by the duration of the exhibition. External or personal factors influence the viewer's experience with time while they occupy the space - if they are in a rush, whether they need to eat, if they have to beat the traffic or if they want to leave the space to walk home before it gets dark. But how is the viewer's relationship with time affected by interaction with art? How is time presented to the viewer through the artwork itself?

When considering the viewer's relationship with time in a gallery setting it is important to acknowledge the influence of 'lived time'. The individual is inseparable from their experience of the past which infiltrates all aspects of their lives. It is through the viewer's understanding of the past that they are able to engage with the present. In *Art and Time* Philip Rawson discusses the influence of memory in how we relate to the world saying "our sense of the present resides in an unending diachronic stream of conscious images involving memory, unconscious associations, expectations...and is the source of all that we experience of time's duration, continuity, succession and change" (2005, p. 49) In a gallery space lived time informs the viewer's perception of

everything with which they engage. The way in which this influences the perception of artwork does not create a divide in the viewer's own time and the time to which the work belongs. Instead the viewer uses their understanding of the past to identify familiar aspects of the artwork in order to understand it.

Historically, the relationship between painting and the audience is one that, through the use of perspective, places the viewer at the centre of the view point. In renaissance paintings, for example, the idea of the vanishing point - all lines of perspective leading to one area - told the viewer that it was the artwork that unfolded around them. In her book *Installation Art : A Critical History*, Claire Bishop discusses this concept in opposition to installation art saying:

The idea of the 'decentred subject' runs concurrently with [activated spectatorship]... *In Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1924), the art historian Erwin Panofsky argued that Renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical 'world' depicted in the painting; the line of perspective with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture was connected to the eyes of the viewer who stood before it. A hierarchical relationship was understood to exist between the centred viewer and the 'world' of the painting...
(2005, p. 11)

Instilling in the viewer that they are centred in relation to the perception of the work raises questions about how this affects their relationship with time when engaging with the piece. If the viewer is 'centralised' in their perception but it has been acknowledged that time passes differently for different individuals, how can it be expected that time is centralised too?

Painting often presents the viewer with an insight into a single moment or point in time. This presentation engages with and confirms the viewer's understanding of time as a series of events or instances. For example, in *The World of Vermeer* the painting 'Maid servant Pouring Milk' is described as such: "...here, in this modest room, he has brought time to a halt. It is not just any moment, but one chosen, unforgettable moment. ...No one can say why this moment and not another is so memorable." (Koningsberger, 1967, p.148) By documenting and preserving a 'snapshot' of time, the painter presents time as a series of isolated moments as opposed to acknowledging the reality of the way in which time passes - not in instances but in a continuous stream. This type of work

creates a relationship with the viewer that solidifies their understanding of linear time.

Henri Bergson's analysis of time is explained as such:

When we think of the time captured by clocks, we think of each moment as a self-contained entity, complete unto itself, separate from the others.For Bergson, this is a highly misleading and ultimately false image of time. Lived time, time that endures, is time that flows, time in which the past and future penetrate into the present in the form of memory and desire.

(Vitale, 2011)

This understanding of temporality clashes with the concept of the centralised viewer.

Ross discusses the artist's tendency to choose to imitate or interpret what she calls "the most pregnant moment in a given narrative." She says that a "singular vantage point in painting or sculpture was thought to provide the viewer with the opportunity to see "through infinite exploration, all times at once." (2012, p.3) However she goes on to discuss how developments in contemporary art allowed a shift to occur in the presentation of a moment. "Ever since the artistic practices of the historical avant-garde (dada, surrealism, constructivism) and the artistic practices of the 1960s, western art has challenged this enduring rule by widening the restrictive register of the meaningful moment." (2012, p.3) By expanding the viewer's understanding of the 'meaningful moment' an emphasis is placed on the duration of such an instance and the importance of the time either side of it. This allows the viewer to step outside of their own understanding and to instead consider the plurality of experienced time and how it varies from one person to the next. This encourages the viewer to experience the temporality of the work in a more complete way acknowledging the complexity of the time being presented to them.

The development of the camera, and in turn, the film camera adapts itself to the widening of the register of the meaningful moment. This allows for the creation of work that decentralises time in relation to the viewer and instead presents it as an indivisible flow. In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger discusses this shift in perspective saying:

The camera isolated momentary appearances and in doing so destroyed the idea that images were timeless. Or, to put it another way, the camera showed that the notion of time passing was inseparable from the experience of the visual....What

you saw depended upon where you were when. What you saw was relative to your position in time and space. It was no longer possible to imagine everything converging on the human eye as on the vanishing point of infinity.

(1972, p.18)

Berger acknowledges that the influence of the camera is one that highlights and presents time to the viewer in a broader way, considering the influence of lived time in the viewers perception of what the camera presents to them. Because the film camera is fundamentally connected to duration, the viewer's relationship with time shifts when it is presented through this lens. Elaborating on the point Berger says "Every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world. The camera - and more particularly the movie camera - demonstrated that there was no centre." (1972, p.18)

How an artwork materialises and the medium that is used directly affects how time is presented and in turn how the spectator understands time. Therefore it is reasonable to question how different media influence time perception in the viewer. How do artists employ techniques to alter or warp time perception? The writing here will discuss the influence of media and space on the viewer and what qualities of both film and installation artwork results in a change in the individual's perception of time.

Chapter 2 : How Depictions of Real Time in Film Affect the Viewer's Perception of Time

Time based media such as film or moving image are fundamentally linked with duration - the duration of the video, of the frame, of the image etc. This link to time is emphasised to the viewer through exploration of the media and, depending on the techniques employed by the artist, it can allow the viewer to feel as though time is passing quickly or slowly. When every moment is highlighted to the viewer in real time the importance of these seconds and minutes become loaded with meaning. Ross acknowledges art's ability to do this stating:

—contemporary aesthetics has generated pictorial, sculptural, installational, and photographic as well as time-based practices (performance, film, video, and new media) that inscribe the spectator in different experiences of time: not only endlessness, but also entropy, ephemerality, repetition, and real time; contingency and randomness; the unproductive—unrecognized—times of modernity...the slowing down, condensation or acceleration of the photographic, cinematic, electronic, and digital image that extends, abbreviates, or speeds up the perceptual experience of the artwork.

(2012, pp. 3-4)

Artworks that directly deal with or emphasise times passing can often have the effect of seemingly slowing down time perception in the viewer by creating a sense of suspense.

When considering film in relation to how it influences time perception, the use of real time becomes of key importance. Chantal Akerman's films are synonymous with depictions of real time and the concept of 'long durée' shots ie. long duration. *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) is a film where Akerman uses time to present the monotony of everyday tasks juxtaposed against the act of prostitution which, for the most part, is shown to be happening off screen. Jeanne is a mother, carrying out her daily duties as Akerman records the meticulously completed tasks with an acute understanding of the relationship between time and the camera. "Stretching its title character's daily household routine in long, stark takes, Akerman's film simultaneously allows viewers to experience the materiality of cinema, its literal duration, and gives concrete meaning to a woman's work." (Margulies, 2009) Drawing the viewer in by using real time depictions of these events the filmmaker creates a heightened sense of suspense in the viewer where they are conscious of how their time



Fig. 1. criterioncollection (2012) Jeanne Dielman - Veal Cutlets. [00:02:22]

is passing in line with Jeanne Dielman's. The spectator is presented with a collection of scenes where the relationship between camera and duration is emphasised. The viewer is acutely aware of times passing which can cause it to feel as though it is passing slowly.

The long duration shots provide time for the audience to view each 'everyday' task in great detail rather than presenting a condensed narrative. When Deluze discusses the depiction of the 'everyday' in cinema he analyses how in actuality it brings perception of temporality to life.

In everyday banality, the action-image and even the movement-image tend to disappear in favour of pure optical situations, but these reveal connections of a new type, which are no longer sensory-motor and which bring the emancipated senses into direct relation with time and thought. This is the very special extension of the posing: to make time and thought perceptible, to make them visible and of sound.

(1985, p.17)

This depiction of the every day calls on an attentive response from the viewer. Making the viewer an active component encourages them to dissect the importance of banal action for signs of narrative development.

...the acuity and amplified concreteness of her images creates a visible instability: as the shot goes on, the viewer becomes aware of his/her own body, restless and then again interested. After "reading" the image of a woman washing dishes, one's attention starts to wander to tiles, to colors, to a rag.

(Margulies, 2009)



Fig. 2. IndieWire (2015) Chantal Akerman's 'Jeanne Dielman' Is a True Action Movie. [00:04:03]

By allowing the ordinary moments to create intense engagement with the viewer, causing them to analyse each scene in detail, the filmmaker creates a suspenseful environment out of instances that usually lack tension. This manipulation of real time presentation through film is one that causes the viewer to be acutely aware of time passing steadily and slowly by encouraging an attentive and engaged response.

Does this presentation of time through film translate to a gallery setting? When considering the work of Christian Marclay entitled *The Clock* (2010), in which he connects thousands of hours of footage from different films to create a 24 hour clock, there is evidence of this heightened awareness of time. The work itself is born out of the laborious and time consuming acts of watching, collecting, editing etc. and shown in a dark gallery space. Not only is the viewer watching the time that they are dedicating to the artwork pass before them but, because of the nature of the clocks use in films - usually as a technique to add suspense or tension - there is a discomfort that accompanies the audience's interaction with the work. Amelia Groom cites Lynne Tillman who describes seeing the piece as such: "It was Thursday - 3:15pm, 3:16pm, 3:17pm - I was watching time pass. My time. It was passing, and I was watching it. What is this watching, what am I watching for? I wouldn't, couldn't, wait for the

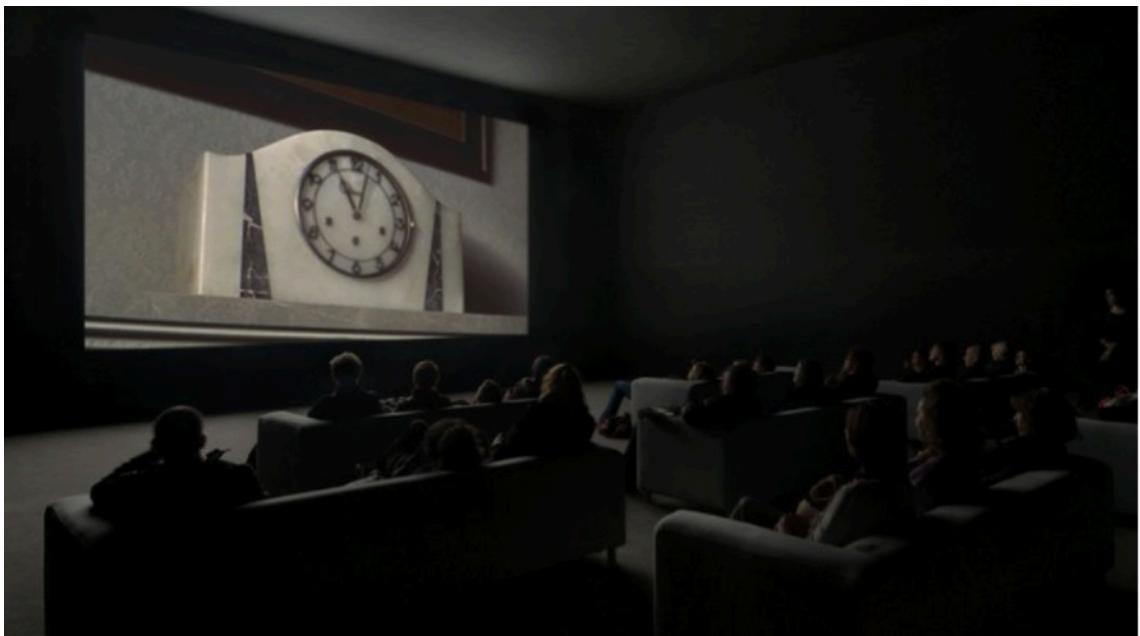


Fig. 3. Westoby, 2010

end.” (2013, p20) The video is on a 24 hour loop with no beginning and no end, blurring one day into the next and not emphasising any one moment. Instead it draws attention to all moments. When engaging with an artwork like this, it is reasonable to feel as though time is moving slowly in the space, as if every second should be analysed and interacted with.

The use of the clock imagery is one that resonates with the viewer and creates an atmosphere of unease. In a capitalist society where time had been commodified, the outright presentation of the clock face can evoke a sense of urgency in the viewer - the pressure to use our time well despite watching intently as it passes. It feeds into the viewer’s understanding of making use of our time, of feeling that any time spent being unproductive is time wasted. George Woodcock describes the relationship between man and the clock as such:

The clock dictates his movements and inhabits his actions. The clock turns time from a process of nature into a commodity that can be measured and bought and sold like soap or sultanas. And because without some means of exact time keeping, industrial capitalism could never have developed and could not continue to exploit the workers, the clock represents an element of mechanical tyranny in the lives of modern men more potent than any individual exploiter or than any other machine.

(Woodcock, 1944)

To consider the clock in this way is to acknowledge the compulsion for productivity that this image evokes in a viewer. As a result it is possible that the spectator becomes stuck

in a type of limbo where they feel as if each second passes slowly, almost tediously, while also being aware of ‘wasting’ time. Groom states that “Once time was homogenised and mechanically measured, the worker’s body was forced to internalize its persistent ticking.” (2013, pp. 19-20) The work directly distorts the viewer’s perception of time through the use of the preexisting connotations that have been established in relation to the clock.

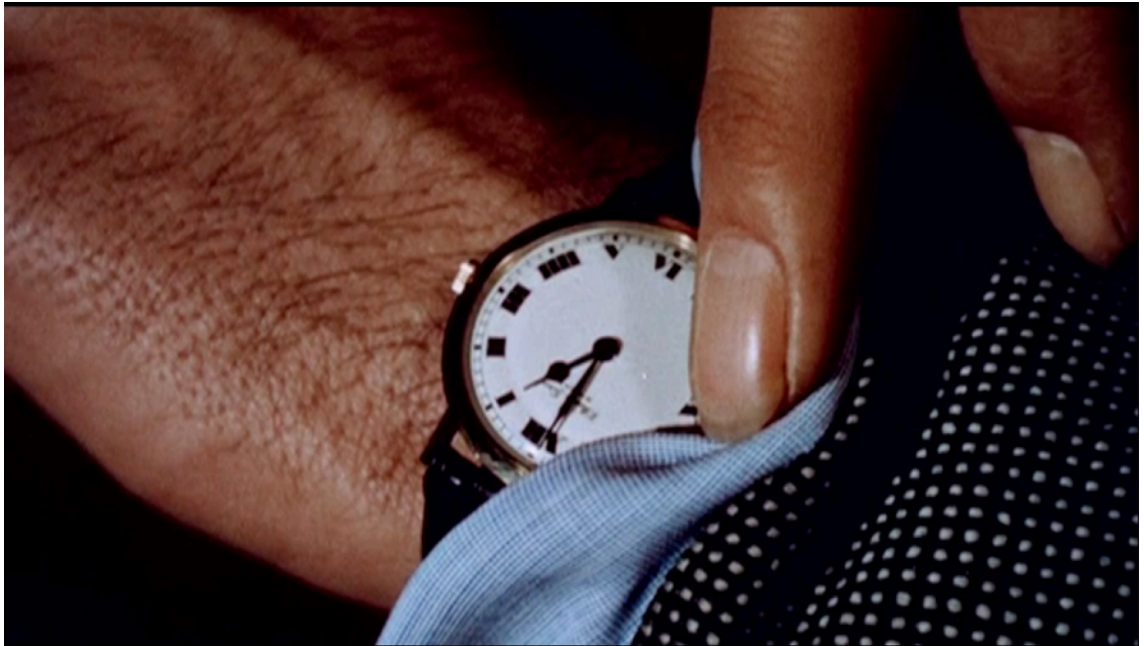


Fig. 4. Walker Art Center (2014) Christian Marclay: *The Clock*. [00:00:16]

When discussing the video work of Bruce Nauman in *Chronophobia* Pamela M. Lee states that “In *Pulling Mouth* his actions have been slowed so much that every detail is magnified and time seems trapped by its own need to move forward.” (2004, P. 67) Marclay’s work manifests itself in a similar way despite using an opposing technique. The emphasis on real time creates a feeling of urgency through the viewer’s desire for time to move towards something rather than simply acknowledging its relentlessness. When questioning why this work evokes a sense of urgency it is interesting to note that Laura Mulvey analyses the human relationship with time and film’s ability to move between motion and stillness.

For human and all organic life, time marks the movement along a path to death, that is, to the stillness that represents the transformation of the animate into the inanimate. In cinema, the blending of movement and stillness touches on this point of uncertainty so that, buried in the cinema’s materiality, lies a reminder of

the difficulty of understanding passing time and ultimately of understanding death.

(2006, p.31)

Perhaps this analysis explains the unease with which we observe real time events, acutely aware that each moment brings us a little bit closer to death. The way in which Marclay employs each of the discussed techniques in *The Clock* demonstrates to the viewer, in plain sight, moments of their life that are passing which, as a result, directly impacts their perception of time.



Fig. 5. Walker Art Center (2014) Christian Marclay: *The Clock*. [00:00:35]

Film work is intrinsically connected to the presentation of duration. The way in which Akerman and Marclay use film to address time has a direct affect on the viewer's relationship with its passing when engaging with the work. Time seems to pass slowly when we are made aware of it, the same way that breathing feels unnatural when you start to pay attention to it. By confronting the viewer with depictions of real time the artist encourages them to pay attention to the reality of duration and suddenly each second becomes as notable as each breath in and out.

Chapter 3: How Immersive Installation Spaces and Embodied Viewing Affect the Spectator's Perception of Time

When considering the idea that time perception is slowed by interaction with moving image or films that place an emphasis on that time, it is reasonable to question what type of work will accelerate this perception. In Ann Hamilton's installation 'The Event of the Thread', she creates a multifaceted environment that allows the audience to participate at various moments throughout the installation.

Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art.

(Bishop, 2005, p.6)

Senses of sight are engaged through the mesmerising movement of the huge curtains brushing against each other as well as in the methodical motion of bodies swinging back and forth. Sound fills the space connecting with the spectator's sense of hearing. Sounds of a person scrawling letters into a microphone, the cooing of pigeons, paper bags with radios inside that travel with members of the audience and deposit snippets of noise around the room. Sitting on the swings or below the curtains where the movement



*Fig. 6. Art21 (2013) Ann Hamilton: "the event of a thread" | Art21 "Extended Play".
[00:01:28]*

of the fabric produces a soft wind that brushes against the skin allows for engagement with the spectator's sense of touch. By acknowledging these senses through the considered way in which the work is installed, the artist invites an experience of 'embodied viewing' to occur.

Hamilton creates an elaborate swing system in which the spectator sets the piece in motion by using the momentum of their movement to weave the huge curtains in and out. Creating elements of the work that are reliant on the viewer's participation calls for a commitment to immersion in the space from the spectator. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi developed the term 'flow' through examining the psychology of engagement. When looking at flow psychology it can be understood that there is a state of mind in which a person can be fully immersed in an activity and in energised concentration. In his own words the idea of flow can be summed up as such:

Contrary to what happens all too often in everyday life, in moments such as these, what we feel, what we wish and what we think are in Harmony. These exceptional moments are what I have called flow experiences. The metaphor of "flow" is one that many people have used to describe the sense of effortless action...

(1997, p. 29)



Fig. 7. Art21 (2013) Ann Hamilton: "the event of a thread" | Art21 "Extended Play". [00:01:56]

This understanding is in relation to every day activities but can a space or environment in which a person is fully immersed replicate this feeling of flow? Csikszentmihalyi asks “Do you ever get involved in something so deeply that nothing else seems to matter, and you lose track of time?”. (1997, p.33) By posing the question he confirms the connection between the flow state and a feeling of accelerated time perception.

Immersive spaces that encourage embodied viewing provide the opportunity for an engagement in flow and the positive or negative response to the artwork plays an essential part in establishing this engagement . “In the midst of the neuroscientific focus on time perception, scientists continue to recognize the integral role that happiness, sadness, fear, and other emotions play in the way we feel the passing of seconds and minutes.” (Dawson and Sleek, 2018) If this is the way that we understand time perception in humans then it is reasonable to assume that artworks that evoke these feelings in a person will alter this perception. Hamilton says of her work “There’s something that happens when you swing, I’m sure there’s a neurological explanation for the sense of pleasure that you feel” (art21, 2013) If this participation in swinging is expected to evoke a sense of pleasure, it is reasonable to conclude that this pleasure will trigger a change in the perception of time.

A positive response to a piece of art encourages a prolonged stay in the space and it is likely that people will be more inclined to spend time in a space that they feel actively immersed in. Rawson focuses on the human ability to allow time to provide context for our response in relation to art.

To concentrate and withdraw our attention from immediate sense impressions, and deliberately structure in our imagination some phase of time into a conscious whole, is a human, rather than an animal, ability. It involves focusing, framing, combining, and holding constant in our image-stream definite sequences of ideas and forms, perhaps steering them along a particular route. Such imaginative attention is not easy, but it is the basis of all education an achievement, as well as of meditation. It is also the essential basis of making and appreciating art. By its sustained presence a work of art focuses and structures our attention.

(2005, p. 49)



Fig. 8. Ewing, 2012

If installation spaces allow for longer duration in a space then logically they provide the platform for sustained appreciation and understanding of the work. If the work has the ability to create extended engagement from the audience it is likely that time will pass faster for those immersed in the environment.

In 2019-2020 Yayoi Kusama's *Where the Lights In My Heart Go* (2016) was exhibited as part of the Desire exhibition in the Irish Museum of Modern Art. One of Kusama's many 'Infinity Mirror Rooms', a series which began in the 1960's, the box invites no more than two visitors at a time to experience an immersive 'infinite' space. In IMMA, it was positioned to the side of the stairs on the ground floor. Although at first this placement might seem unconsidered it's possible that this was the best way to show it - not something that compliments or speaks to other work around it but instead exists as an entity in itself. The outside of the cube is entirely mirrored allowing it to reflect its surroundings and almost shrink into the space it occupies. Inside the box the entire concept of shrinking in space is dissolved. The mirrored interior allows the space around the viewer to expand in front of their eyes - almost like looking in the mirror of a changing room to see an infinite collection of "yous" staring back. Holes dotted around the space allow natural light to pierce the interior of the box.

Stepping into an *Infinity Mirror Room* is like being transported into a dazzling unknown space. While this experience has been compared to virtual reality, the rooms show, most fundamentally, art's capacity to present alternatives to

everyday life through relatively simple means. Providing a space for imagination and projection is one of art's most valuable roles in contemporary life.

(Medium, 2018)



Fig. 9. Klein, 2019

Given that light is the phenomenon by which we measure time - tracking the movement of the earth around the sun - the use of natural light feels poignant in terms of how the space affects the viewer's time perception. The juxtaposition between light and dark inside the box has a unique impact on how the spectator feels upon emerging. A visitor to the space described this feeling as such: "It felt like when you were coming out it was a new day, like waking up, your eyes adjusting from dark like they do when you open them in the morning" (Mulvaney, 2022a) By creating such a drastic difference between the light outside the box and the darkness inside it, Kusama's work evokes a physical response from the viewer that directly mirrors the physical response that occurs when one day moves into the next. The work seems to speak to themes of infinite time and space.

When moving inside the space it quickly becomes unclear where the door is and on which wall. Being almost consumed by the space distorts the viewer's perception of that space making it difficult to determine how close or far away they are at any given

moment from the walls. Heathfield describes the relationship between time and distortion of space saying “Duration will often be accompanied by the spatial senses of expansion, suspension or collapse or by reverential, chaotic or cosmic phenomena, as notions of temporal distinctions are undone.” (Heathfield, 2009) When considering this in relation to Kusama’s work it is evident that warped time perception and a sense of expanded or distorted space directly influence each other. When you’re looking at something that seems endless, with mirrors allowing the space to stretch out in front of you, it may feel as though the time you spend in that space is endless. It can feel like time stops in a space like this and the rules that you’re used to living by don’t apply. The distortion of the interior, of light, of vision leads to the distortion of your perception of time. It feels like you could live in that space for days and feel like only minutes had passed.

By providing the opportunity for the viewer to become engaged in embodied viewing, Hamilton’s work creates a space in which the viewer is encouraged to become fully immersed. This immersion in an activity or space has been shown to affect the viewer’s perception of time - making it seem as though it is passing by quickly. Similarly Kusama, by creating a sense of ‘infinity’ in what is, in reality, an enclosed space, causes the spectator to lose track of the reality of time’s passing. The way in which these artworks influence time perception is in direct opposition to how the film works of Akerman and Marclay affect the viewer, showing that the techniques employed by the different artists can influence perception of time in the viewer with the potential to either speed it up or slow it down.

Conclusion

The analysis of the way in which art is created, developed and presented to the viewer is integral to our understanding of how it impacts those who interact with it. Time is related to every aspect of our experience. Even when we are lost in an activity or environment we are not separated from it. It has passed whether we have noticed it or not. There are many ways in which art is connected to time - the time it takes to create, to install, to edit or simply how long it gets to exist in a space where people are welcomed to experience it. As we cannot be separated from our experience of temporality, art is also connected to how we perceive time. Time perception is not affected consistently for each spectator when they engage with art. Different types of artworks evoke different responses, allowing it to speed up, slow down or pass adamantly.

The film camera shows time in a different way to painting, just as painting shows it differently to installation spaces. Each of these works, valid in their own right, through their media and presentation, have an intrinsic connection to how the viewer perceives time. Regardless of how the work affects you, you have given your time to it. You have asked that it uses it wisely and that it evokes some response. Whether the art you see allows time to pass you by as you eagerly engage or whether it causes you to reflect on your time, it is there and its passing is inevitable.

Art has the power to warp and change time perception in the viewer. That a work of art can evoke such a drastic change in an audience, that is can influence our relationship with something as fundamental as time, is an amazing quality for a creative work to possess. Contemporary art can create these moments in our lives that change how we perceive the world and it will do so as long as we offer our time.

Appendices

Here is a compiled list of statements I have acquired. These are first hand accounts from people who visited the Infinity Box *Where All The Lights In My Heart Go* by Yayoi Kusama as part of *Desire: A Revision From The 20th Century To The Digital Age* at The Irish Museum of Modern Art (2019-2020). Each person was asked to write a short statement prompted by the question: “How did you feel upon entering the space?”.

“It was all mirrored which meant you weren’t sure about approaching it. Only two at a time could enter. It was other worldly and hard to figure out where the walls were. You felt consumed. It felt like when you were coming out it was a new day, like waking up, your eyes adjusting from dark like they do when you open them in the morning.” Mulvaney, N. (2022a) Statement from Emma Scully, 18 January.

“When looking at the artwork from the outside, there is sense of business of every day life from the reflections you see in the mirrors. When you enter the artwork, this sensory input is then removed and your left with stillness and silence. I felt that the lack of sensory stimuli grasps you and you're not focused on the rush and business anymore. You're given space to pause, be in the moment and appreciate the art for the aura it creates. You're fully immersed.” Mulvaney, N. (2022b) Statement from Ciara Flanagan, 21 January.

“As I turned from the ticket desk to make my way up IMMA’s stairs, there was a large mirrored box. I wasn’t sure if it was part of the exhibition or not. The woman sitting next to it, looked up from her book, and smiled. I knew it was, when the name Yayoi Kusama was printed in bold black ink on the wall. We stood awkwardly looking at our reflection until she gestured for us to go inside. We hesitated and she opened the door. I carefully stepped into what felt like a black hole. She shut the door and we were alone in a dark world of tiny lights. I could only see her when the white stars flickered. I was conscious of the woman outside the entire time. We stayed for just enough time to feel the work and left before people could begin to queue. Our eyes had to readjust to the bright lights, as we stepped outside. I remember wondering if Kusama actually made the work herself. Probably not.” Mulvaney, N. (2022c) Statement from Lauryn McNamee, 22 January.

“Upon entering the Yayoi Kusama installation and when the door closed behind I felt an urgency for release from the space as my eyes adjusted to their surroundings. A discomfort in the disorientation throughout my body, but once my sight altered in the mysterious darkness, with this did follow a sense of calm. The wonder of what you're doing there and whereabouts you even are in the space makes time itself seem of little importance, as it passes. Kusama's installation as a whole is an immersive experience to say the least with its ambiguous feeling of enchantment once settled inside the space. The person sitting outside the installation, almost to guard it, makes sense with the disorientation you feel once inside this other worldly like space.” Mulvaney, N. (2022d) Statement from Hollie Keegan, 22 January.

“I suppose the main thing is that it had the effect to transport you out of your normal reality if you get what I mean, since your typical sensory input wasn’t the same as outside the box then this impacts your perception and changes how you think if you allowed yourself to embrace the different environment.” Mulvaney, N. (2022e) Statement from Paul Flood, 26 January.

“It felt like I was standing in space, with the stars flickering and silence all around. Took time for my eyes to adjust from the brightness outside in the fully glass reception. Once they did I wanted to sit down and meditate but we had a time limit in there so that the next museum visitor could enter. To exit we had to knock on the wall for it to be opened as we couldn’t see. The small size of the box from the outside contrasts with the vastness of the space inside.” Mulvaney, N. (2022f) Statement from Ruth McConville, 26 January.

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