

Spaces of Engagement:  
Tropes of Slow Cinema in  
Multisensory Installation Art

B Lauper Tisch

2024

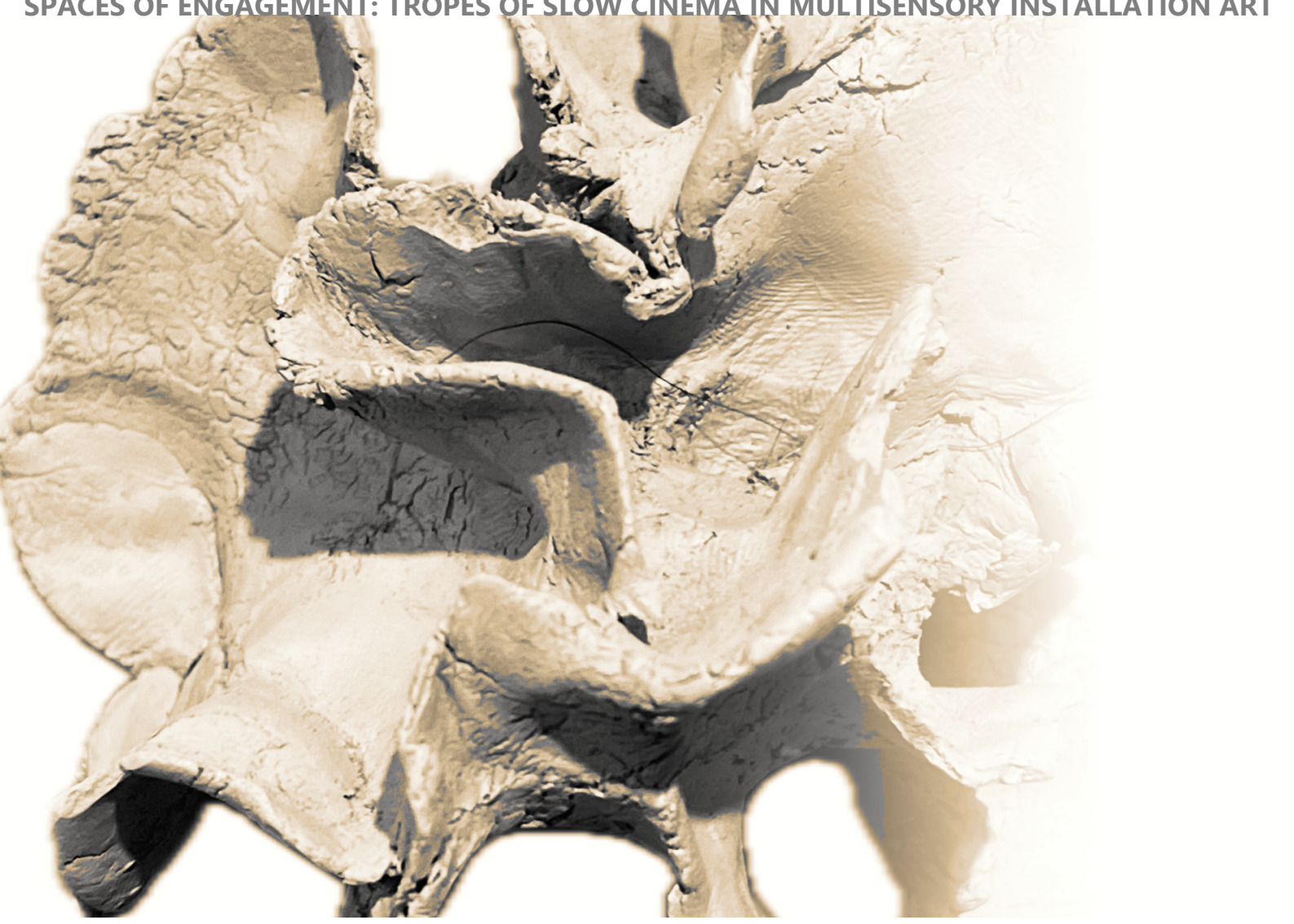
Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis  
Master of Philosophy  
Auckland University of Technology  
School of Art and Design



# SLOW DOWN

# YOU'RE HERE

SPACES OF ENGAGEMENT: TROPES OF SLOW CINEMA IN MULTISENSORY INSTALLATION ART



## DEDICATION

*This Work is dedicated to Lea Nova. The Earth without Art is Eh.*

Slow cinema has given rise to interest in contemplative processes in media and installation art as a mode of expression. Drawing on Jarvis' (2020) claim that slow cinema embodies an oppositional rhythm in the era of fast capitalism, the proposed practice-led study delves into contemplative processes within the maker and viewers/participants of multisensory installations. Practice-led methods include contemplating and sensing, experimenting with multisensory video installation, clay sculpting, and improvising and live performance. The research draws on Frankham's (2019) writing on spaces of engagement and self-reflection along with Bishop's (2012) analysis of subjective lived experiences, personal and collective interactions, and participatory art. Using an interdisciplinary lens within a methodology of *a/r/tography* (Irwin and Springgay, 2005) and Aluli Meyer's triangulation of mind, body, and spirit (2008), I position the self as an artist/researcher/teacher who draws communities together to engage in shared, lived inquiries. The research-creation (Manning & Massumi 2016), explores the interplay between contemplation, sensory engagement, and interactive socially engaged art. The practice is realised in the form of a multisensory installation that seeks to combine content and form.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DECLARATION

I retain copyright over all works generated by me as the artist. All other works are used with permission of the respective contributors or removed from this edition of the exegesis.

## ETHICS APPROVAL

All research was conducted in keeping with the regulations and guidelines of the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC) in 2023. Given that this project involved the creation of a fictional work and all actors were employed as professional contributors, it was unnecessary to gain ethical approval for the research.

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And, of course, my most heartfelt appreciation and thanks go to Dan, Merlin, Quincy, and Lea, my core family. I feel very lucky.

All4One4all!



Often, we [artists] feel as though we have the key to something.

I don't think that we do at all, we just dwell on it more

(Bowie, cited in Apted, 4:03).

The most important word between action and contemplation is the word 'and'

(Rohr, 1987, p.1).



CHAPTER 1



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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My MPhil thesis created within the AUT School of Art and Design delves into tropes of contemplative and participatory art, with a focus on spaces of engagement. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks in slow cinema and a/r/tography (Irwin and Springgay, 2005) my research-creation (Manning & Massumi 2016), explores the transformative potential of artistic practice as both a methodological and experiential endeavour.

In this project, I embark on a journey to discover deeply engaging experiences within video installation art that not only offer opportunities for introspection but also foster holistic engagement and awareness of presence for both myself and the audience. Grounded in a relational web, I follow propositions by Erin Manning and Aluli Meyer, seeking to immerse viewers in sensorially rich environments while stripping away distractions to connect with the essence of the experience.

Over the course of this research I return to the notion of "less is more," as I explore the argument put forth by Bettina Frankham (2019) regarding the potential of contemplative art to create spaces of engagement and self-reflection; where viewers are prompted to explore gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves. With form combined strongly with content, I aim to research and create an interactive video installation that can be realised as an experience in itself rather than a representation and activate complex, situated, and subjective truths (p.5).

Within the scope of this research-creation, I engage collaboratively and individually with the concept of slowness and the interconnectedness of sensory perception and cognition. My method-led approach incorporates sight, sound, movement, touch, and taste, inviting viewers to wander and wonder within the interactive space I co-create

with other artists under my creative leadership. Through this exploration, I contemplate the role of slowing down and connecting with emotions in a time of complexity and overwhelm, seeking moments of “just-be” and “just-is” through the engagement with art, oneself, and each other.



## EXEGESIS STRUCTURE

This exegesis contextualises and conceptualises the project across five chapters.

Chapter one introduces the project with an overview of the lens and the framework of the research-creation.

In Chapter two, I offer a positioning of myself as a subjective artist/researcher/teacher emphasising my relation to slowness.

Chapter three provides a contextual review of knowledge on slow cinema, illuminating tropes of chronopolitics, contemplative processes, and interconnectedness. I discuss examples of slowness within cinema and video installation art.

While Chapter four outlines the research design of the thesis project, including research paradigm and question, methodology and methods. The qualitative, creative practice-led inquiry engages in contemplating and sensing, clay sculpting, experimenting with video installation, clay sculpting, and improvising and live performance.

The final Chapter five presents a critical commentary reflecting on the ideas explored in my practice and discussing reasonings of the research-creation process. The documentation of the test show and final exhibition embodies the contemplative and participatory nature of the research and invites viewers into a living entity to unfold and engage with.

Ultimately, the exegesis conclusion reflects on my practice-led findings during the year.



CHAPTER 2



## 2 POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH

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Slow Movements, P.A.C.E.

Positioning myself within the context of this MPhil thesis, I am compelled to reflect on the personal journey that has brought me to this point. Twenty years ago, in 2004, I gave birth to my first child. As I embraced the rhythms of new parenthood, I found myself drawn to the beauty of simplicity and the profound lessons inherent in slowing down. When she was first born, I went on long walks with a baby wrap, through the pristine countryside in a Swiss mountain village, a home I came back to after a few years of international travels, studies, and work (in Ireland, France, Brazil, and Canada.) I had to admit: Small is beautiful; that tiny person and simplicity mattered; the “minority rule” was in full action.

I engaged in other slow movements, too, such as restorative yoga, meditation and mindfulness, more sustainable slow food, and anthroposophical inspired unhurried medicine and education. I also liked taking heaps of photos and home videos. My passions for images and my little friend merged. Professionally though, “it” seemed more and more that I was taking too many backward steps. To calm my frustrations, I created a poetic and psychologically positive acronym: I imagined P.A.C.E. as a shorthand for “personal and cultural enlightenment”! It motivated me to g(l)o(w) with the flow, and keep moving forward slowly... which at times felt like not moving at all. As an experienced hiker, I trusted the wisdom of “one step at a time” although I lost sight of which mountain I was climbing. Political philosophers helped, such as Mahatma Gandhi’s famous words: “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way” (n.d.).

Eventually, I was blessed with two more children (which did not quite equate to slowing down to the power of three.) By then, we were walking along the shores in our newly found homeland down under in Aotearoa New Zealand. My husband is an expat New Zealander who grew up in Canada. I'm Swiss-Danish and we met in Ecuador. On the one hand, I have strong roots and wings, on the other hand, you may say I am also a restless voyager, a seeker. I changed continents, but still at times I felt stuck. I love traveling in the inner and outer worlds, yet. I wanted to change my pre-children career as a high school teacher and become a filmmaker.

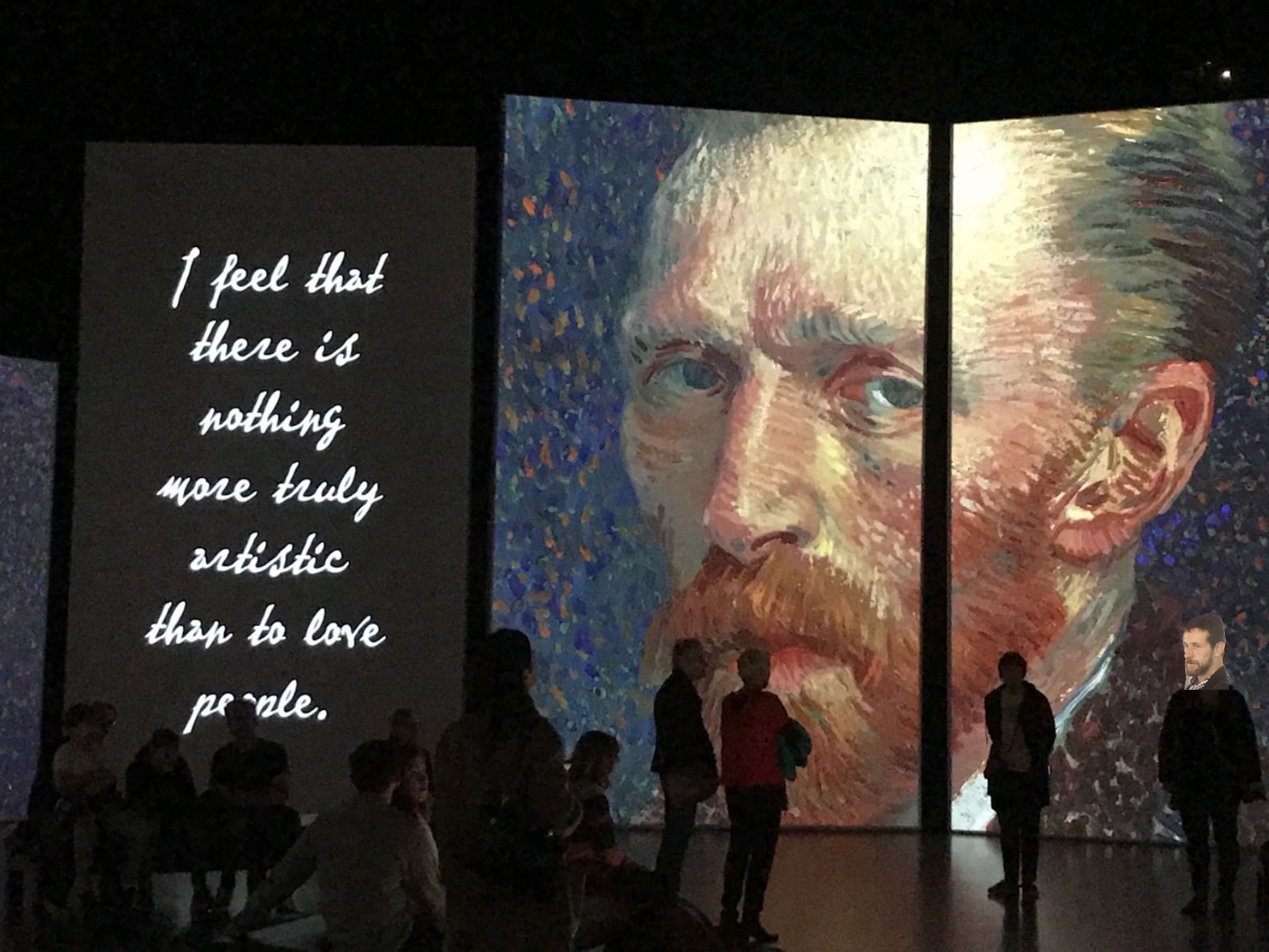
Parenting, community building, and home renovation became my most multifaceted and fulfilling creative projects to date. I particularly enjoy the multi- and interdisciplinarity of the craft, the collaboration, and the head-heart-and-hand approach. Eventually, I made documentary filmmaking, a passion I had long harboured, more of a priority. After gaining a Master of Art in Screen Production, I worked at a Media Design School and as a freelance videographer. I enjoyed the “part”-time nature of these roles as I identify as a “parent-artist-researcher-teacher”.

State-of-the-art, large-scale, immersive exhibitions on world tour such as the "VanGogh Live Grand Experience", seen in Auckland in 2021, blew my mind. Not just as an intrigued and envying artist but it also sparked a realisation: helping people is an art. Reading an excerpt of one of Vincent's letters in gratitude to his brother in 1888 – extra-largely projected beside his digitalised paintings – touched me deeply. He wrote: “I feel that there is nothing more truly artistic than to love people.”

Could my compassion and dedication as a teacher and mother make an important momentary or even long-term positive difference in youngsters' lives? Drawing upon the wisdom of anthroposophical scholars and educator Rudolf Steiner (1921), Johann

Wagemann (2021) proclaimed that: “The art of (self-) education and (self-) education of art is a way of conscious(ness) development” (3:18).

As I embark on this research journey, I carry with me a deep-seated belief in the transformative power of art and education, one that is rooted in introspective learning and creative exploration, in “reverence, love, and freedom”, “the need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility” (Steiner, 1919), a belief that has shaped my personal and professional identity. Through this exegesis, I seek to weave together threads of theory and practice, offering insights into the intersection of art, philosophy, and holistic education. In so doing, I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the contemplative potential of art in fostering connection, introspection, and a sense of peace. My personal wish is to create art as an artefact, an experience, a service, and a lifestyle.



*I feel that  
there is  
nothing  
more truly  
artistic  
than to love  
people.*

*I had tears in my eye when I stood here, watching and reading. Or maybe it was also because my dad looked similar? (He was a 'barbarossa', too.)*



I think that what a person normally goes to the cinema for is time: for time lost or spent or not yet had. [S]he goes there for a living experience! 'Stars', storylines, and entertainment have nothing to do with it (Tarkovsky, 1985, p.83).

You'll never get it if you don't slow down, my friend (Auggie, 1995, cited in Jarvis, 2020, p.385).



CHAPTER 3



### 3 REVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

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#### SLOW CINEMA(S)

The expression cinema of slowness was coined by the French film critic Michel Ciment in his address about the state of cinema at the San Francisco International Film Festival in 2003. Coincidentally, this is precisely when I started to embody slowness through pregnancy and maternity. Since then, it has been widely used in film, characterised by an adherence to the long take as a self-reflexive device (Tiago De Luca, 2016, p.24). Matthew Flanagan (2008) is credited for his foundational research towards an aesthetic of slow in contemporary cinema – while also acknowledging that slowness in cinema was not a new concept – and Jonathan Romney (2010) for his article In search of lost time which popularised the terms slow cinema and contemplative cinema (ibid).

In this chapter, I will focus on some of the key developments and aspects within slow cinema with Brian Jarvis (2020) as a main contributor. I seek to illuminate the middle part of my research question of how tropes of slow cinema might be explored in relation to contemplation and interconnectedness and then move to how an installation might do employing multisensory spaces of collective engagement.

In close readings on a vast collection of unhurried films from various countries, decades, and genres, Jarvis defined attributes of slow cinema such the following: as observational mode, real-time action, measured pace, minimalist mise-en-scène, meticulous tableau shots, aesthetic sensibility, hyperrealism, mundane repetitions, taciturn and opaque narratives, ambient sound, de-dramatisation, an interest in the conventionally uninteresting, philosophical insights and absurdist comedy.

I like to highlight a scene he describes from *Smoke*, an American independent film by Auster and Wang (1995) where Auggie shows Paul his picture project – a series of four thousand photos he took of a street corner in Brooklyn, every morning at 8 am. He confronts him as Paul flicks through the pages and says: “You’ll never get it if you don’t slow down, my friend” (Jarvis, 2020, p.385). Jarvis suggested:

Slow cinema with its stubborn insistence on staying put over incessant mobility, delay over immediacy, and sustained contemplation of the singular rather than fleeting glance across multiple streams constituted not simply an aesthetic choice, but an alternative and potentially oppositional rhythm in the era of fast capitalism (ibid).

Jarvis turned to radical philosophers such as Michel Foucault (1976), Henri Lefebvre (1995), and Giorgio Agamben (2005) who elaborated on Karl Marx’s (1844) intellectual concept of chronopolitical and biopolitical perception and intervention declaring that every culture was primarily a specific experience of time and that the ultimate goal of a genuine revolution was not merely to change the world but to change time (p.403). The initial task of altering a tempo and rhythm-analytical imprinting on a whole era might happen through force or subtle manipulation (Nuno Martins, 2018, p.15).

Grateful about the input of some deep philosophical theories, I was longing to turn towards more contemporary sources and to counterbalance the male and Eurocentric thoughts. I turn to Manulani Aluli Meyer (2003) and Erin Manning (2014) who I regard as well-rooted and had wings in the air. I will soon share how they have practically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually provided soothing and potent food. For now, I followed Manning’s second proposition for research-creation: “Don’t be afraid of philosophy.” So I decided to hang in there and keep exploring the theoretical

framework surrounding slow cinema. I felt even though I am only touching the surface of bio- and chronopolitics, it has a significant influence on my practice and my “conscious(ness) development (Wagemann, 2019). As a teacher and social citizen, I also found it beneficial for me to pause and reflect on how time influences politics and politics influences time. There are many moving parts and stakeholders, definitions, dimensions, and experiences.

Afonso called for an emancipated return of cinema to its origins with almost still images in a painterly and photographic style. He argued that this style invited the audience to cultivate introspection and search for meaning. Jarvis supported lingering on and even enduring images – *an abolition of time by space* – while he stated that globalisation raced the other way – *effacing space by time* (p.16). I understand the first one as being fully in the moment, in the here and now, where the past, present, and future are inseparable, going deep where one is located, positioned versus being everywhere all the time at the same time with no physical limits and a constant drive for the newest. Sadly, a lot of people seem to be out of touch with themselves and their surroundings, racing after time [like me working on this exegesis deadline] and then missing the moment.

Similarly, Béla Tarr, a master filmmaker in slow cinema believed that continuity through long- takes allowed scenes to be conceived, fostering attention and tension which would make the film a real psychological process capable of turning somebody around (Ed Tan, 2018, p. 12). In his 2000 film *Werckmeister Harmonies*, there is an almost 4.5-minute long scene where the main character, a dreamy, and intellectually slow postman, with a poetic understanding of his surroundings, approaches and whale carcass on display and stares into its large eye. It is exemplary for many slow

cinema films where the viewers have to sit with their thoughts and feelings as the plot is not pushed forward but allows time to **explore gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves** (Bettina Frankham, 2019.) The focus is on the stillness and internal rather than external movement.

Third party copyright material:

Two screenshots from *Werckmeister Harmonies*, a slow cinema film by Béla Tarr (2000), depicting an over-the-shoulder edit and an extreme close up after the longtake.

Naeem Nedaee (2019) called this a creative Deleuzian effort: an intertwining of the world, the image, and the viewer, which contributed to the imagining of a more profound reality where life's virtual possibilities could be encountered (p.48). As a key to accessing deeper levels of understanding, Jarvis (2020) described Jonathan Crary and Susan Sontag who called for **a suspension of perceptions and an approach against interpretation [...] to recover our senses and learn to see, hear, feel more** (p. 25). **Stripping films of superfluous distractions in favour of sensorially connecting with the essence of the everyday allowed for mundane tasks and happenings to be expressed and experienced** (Dagmar Brunow, 2010). This is applied regarding the narrative, and image. and sound. Besides ambient sound (often while sitting in a car), Jim Jarmusch also plays with random dialogue, expressing that he finds just listening in a bus station more valuable than watching mainstream movies (Jarvis, 2020, p. 18).

Romney (2010) stressed that **especially in times with an oppressive daily awareness of life being politically, economically, and ecologically overwhelming, slow cinema's**

ability to hold off impulses could help people engage with the world more reflexively which could indeed be critical, potentially political and spiritual (p. 43). Just imagine following our physiognomy of having two ears versus one mouth, to listen more, pause, hear with the heart, and real-eyes. Qiuling Ma Yang (2013), however, argued that there seemed to be a lack of contemplation in modern society and media, born out of a fear of seriousness to question existentialist and surrealist depths of angst, longings, worries, hatred, and hunger for love (p. 4). While certain slow poetic-philosophical films delved into hard-to-map areas of personal experience and painfully documented psychological breakdowns, others rewarded the viewers with an exalted reverie, a realm of myth and even a sense of the cosmological sublime, yet both might be, as Romney (2010) added, a form of escape – not necessarily nobler than the ones from the action and entertainment film industry – stilling the thirst for abstraction in an extremely demanding world of immediacy and simultaneity (p. 44).

In my last paragraphs, enquiring about slow cinema in this analytical research-led phase of my practice, I will illuminate some more cautious voices. Sarah Hamblin (2019) critically elaborated that contemplative cinema of the 21<sup>st</sup> century used slowness to train the spectator to see political but abandoned the urgent calls for action despite shared problems of modernisation and ongoing spread of capital and homogenisation of culture (p.214). Documentary scholars in particular had long argued against the political potential of the art documentary film. Bill Nichols, (2010) argued:

The museum, art institution, or festival is a space of thoughtful contemplation and sophisticated judgment, rather than political action. There is no radical

spectatorship, but bourgeois spaces that existed firmly within both the economic and taste-culture structures of capitalism (p.580).

Moreover, Jarvis (2020) accentuated that contemplative cinema was affordable only to a global elite rather than the (s)lower classes due to filmmaking and distribution being highly expensive business enterprises, but alleviated this by suggesting that the focus of its utopian nature was a necessary first step for transformative action (p.18).

In summary, Jarvis acknowledged that *chronopolitics were complex and could not be polarised into liberating slowness and crushing speed* while Afonso (2021) concluded that *it was within every single one of the audience members that the images completed themselves*, through critical – and humorous – reminiscence. Richard Rohr (1987) suggested that *the most important word is neither action nor contemplation, but the word and* (p.1). For him, the *opposite of contemplation is not action but reaction; action proceeds from contemplation and deep silence*. Thematically, this was a vital moment for my research-creation.

#### EXAMPLES OF SLOWNESS IN VIDEO INSTALLATION ART

Following my interest in video installations, I was looking for critical findings relating this art form with slow cinema. A study by Rina Arya (2013) revealed that new media art since the 1970s offered additional ways to express contemplative art: It allowed artists to define their relationship to different subjects including nature, religion, sexuality, and identity, while sophisticated technology widened the possibilities for creating transformative environments that were immersive” (p.3). Concretely, Arya highlighted a series of award-winning works by Bill Viola, an American contemporary

video artist. Examining the idea of just being, she described how Viola in his moving images used the elemental powers of nature – such as birth, fear of drowning, and death – as a reminder of our humanity and an articulation of the incommensurability of reality, pointing out that **in the postmodern condition, the sublime was a model of consciousness without the upward theological transcendentalist reverence as in earlier centuries. It just is.** (Arya, 2013, p.2).

To bring the viewers into a state of contemplation, Jonathan Evens (2019) explores how **notions of time, movement, and stillness are central** to Viola's decade-long practice, by extremely slowing down the actions in his films, he made the observers pause, encouraging them to sink into the image and deeply connect to the feelings captured in it. His video installation *Observance* (2002) showing a group of people in ultra-slow-motion looking at something off-screen in shock and horror got selected for the 2021 exhibition at The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki All That Was Solid Melts. According to the curator, the artist's sense of loss, sadness and fatalism led him to contemplate and depict sorrow, mourning and catharsis, and by **holding up a mirror to the viewer's lives, his work was free to attach to the inner psyche and find a company with experiences of unsighted, unknowable, unthinkable distress, and ultimately, through meditation and acceptance self-perception became a path to self-knowledge** (Juliana Engberg, 2021, p. 8). Aesthetically, Viola relied on the **language of abstraction in a painterly quality, dissolution of form, infinite spaces, and the presence of voids to represent what was beyond representation and apprehension** (Arya, 2013).

Third party copyright material:

Five video art works by Bill Viola >

- Observance* (2012)
- Heaven and Earth* (1992)
- Life Death Rebirth* (1995)
- Hands* (1991)
- The Crossing* (1996)

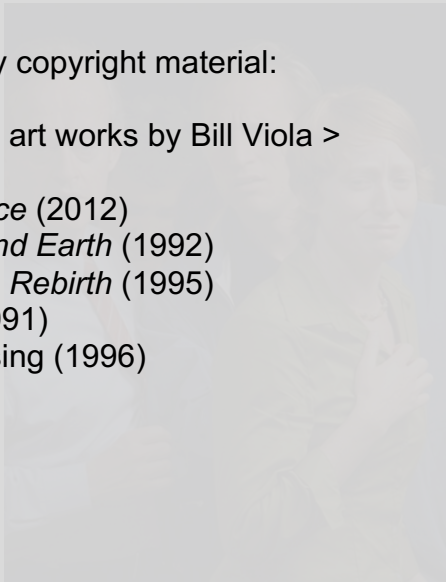


Figure 21: Viola, B. (Media Artist) (2012).  
*Observance*. USA



Figure 20: Viola, B. (Media Artist) (1992).  
*Heaven and Earth*. USA

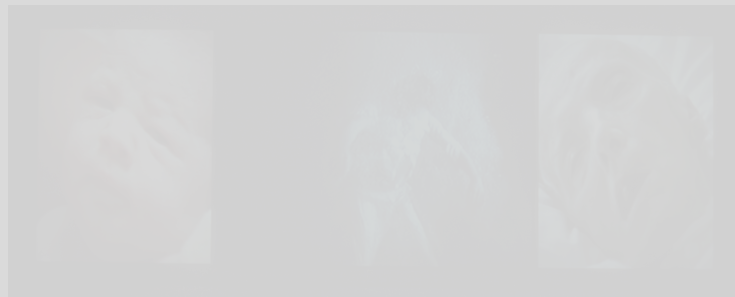


Figure 23: Viola, B. (Media Artist) (1995). *Life Death Rebirth*. USA

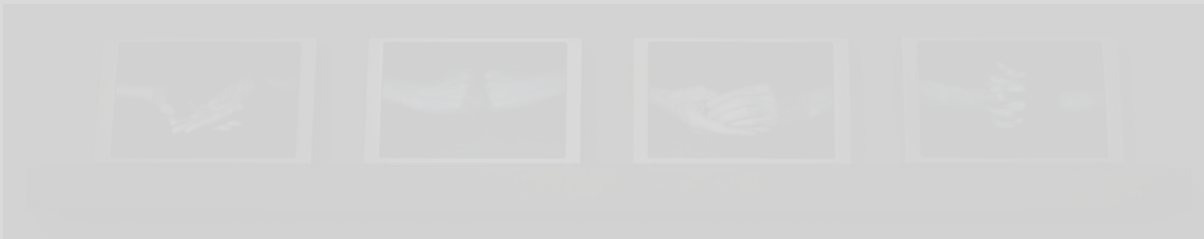


Figure 24: Viola, B. (Media Artist) (1991). *Hands*. USA



Figure 25: Viola, B. (Media Artist) (1996). *The Crossing*. USA

With the expression art is about doing complex things for a simple reason, media artist Joseph Michael (2017) from New Zealand Aotearoa revealed that in his work *Antarctica – While You Were Sleeping* he followed a simple idea but a complicated process: How to put an iceberg in the middle of a city. Michael's Antarctica was a large-scale immersive video and sound installation projected onto landmark buildings in Auckland (2017) and New York (2019). Michael affirmed that his quiet and slow-moving installation was not designed to enforce meaning, but instead to open a space for reflection and allow for connection with nature in highly urbanised spaces. **Relating to people with the heart or a feeling of grandeur and solitude** rather than practical science and a discourse on sustainability, lets them engage with art on a much deeper level: **"People go off and ask their own questions"** (Michael, 2017). The idea of creating a space where people could go off and ask their own questions and following a simple idea but a complicated process felt motivating to me as an artist-researcher.



Figure 4: Joseph, M. (Media Artist). (2017). *Antarctica – While You Were Sleeping*. [Installation], Auckland, New Zealand

Before I move into my practice-led research regarding how an installation might explore tropes of slow cinema, I want to spend some more time reflecting on contemplation and interconnectedness through a different lens. The scholar Manulani Auli Meyer (2003; 2008) offered an indigenous and authentic approach to Hawaiian hermeneutics and epistemology, and the **triangulation of meaning** in its many forms:

<i>Body</i>	<i>Mind</i>	<i>Spirit</i>	<i>(Source)</i>
Objective	Subjective	Cultural	Karl Popper
Facts	Logic	Metaphor	M. McCloskey
Perception	Conceptualization	Remembering	Yoga Sutra
Empiricism	Rationalism	Mysticism	Ken Wilber
Information	Knowledge	Understanding	Manu Aluli
Sensation	Reason	Contemplation	Ken Wilber
Instinct	Intelligence	Intuition	Halemakua
Emotion	Feeling	Awareness	Spinoza
Force	Power	Liberation	David Hawkins
Its	I	We	Buddhist inspired
Life	Mind	Joy	Upanishads
External	Internal	Transpatial	Ken Wilber
Knowledge	Knowing	Enlightenment	Māori inspired
True	Good	Beautiful	Plato
Gross	Subtle	Causal	Ken Wilber
Tinana	Hinengaro	Wairua	Māori
'Ike (to see)	'Ike (to know)	'Ike (revelations)	Hawaiian
Hearing	Thought	Meditation	Buddhist
Duality	Nonduality	Wholeness	Ken Wilber
Biology	Psychology	Spirituality	Manu Aluli
Seeing	Thinking	Being	Ken Wilber
Word	Meaning	Perception	Patanjali
Monologue	Dialogue	Presence	Ken Wilber
Empiricism	Epistemology	Hermeneutics	Manu Aluli
Dot	Circle	Sphere	Mel Cheung
Eye of the Flesh	Eye of the Mind	Eye of Contemplation	Ken Wilber
Ways of Knowing	Ways of Being	Ways of Doing	Aboriginal
Decolonization	Transformation	Mobilization	Poka Laenui

NOTE: Unless noted specifically in the reference section at the end of this chapter, all descriptors in this list have been collected during a lifetime of experiences and kept as journal entries without citation. Students have also given me their renditions, and I have begun that list. The list itself is as self-evident as truth.

Figure 5: Aluli Meyer, A. (2008). Triangulation of meaning in its many forms [Table]. Hawaii

With this list, Aluli Meyer (2008) intended to give a glimpse of the future: body-mind-spirit knowing becomes **part of a wholeness** forming when combined, changes the culture of research, simply by engaging all three categories as they are all just one (p.227). In regards to spirit, she pointed out that contemplation brings insight, steadiness, and interconnection. She writes: "[...] it is questions you will frame

differently after eye contact with a child [...], it is the “Aha!” that came from stirring oatmeal after a night of transcription (p.230). In 2003, she called to us all to **begin the dance of absolute knowing, to take joy in each other’s company, and to let us all sing our release** (p.62). It was unusual and inspiring to me to come across academic writing expressed with such joy, advocacy, and gusto. She encouraged to **use our sensual cues (the gross and physical matter of our intelligence), our rational stirrings (the subtle and subjective matter of our knowing), and our causal presence (the mystical knowing of life) connecting us to all ideas, all people, all stars** (ibid).

As one of her heroes in this regard, Aluli Meyer (2008) cited Māori Marsden, an expert (tohunga) on Māori philosophy. I carry Marsden and Aluli Meyer's reflections on the **"passionate, inward subjective approach"** to the next chapter about my research design, methodology, and methods:

Abstract rational thought and empirical methods cannot grasp what is the concrete act of existing which is fragmentary, paradoxical, and incomplete.

The only way lies through a passionate, inward subjective approach

(Marsden, p.228).

Contemplative art has the potential to create spaces of engagement and self-reflection where viewers are prompted to explore gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves. Where form combines strongly with content, a work can be realised as an experience in itself rather than a representation, and activate complex, situated, and subjective truths

(Frankham, 2019, p.5).



CHAPTER 4

# How can photo and video art become a space of contemplation and engagement, connecting body, mind, and spirit in the here and now and the unknown to move from the deeply personal of the maker to the collective allowing experiences to become relatable and hopeful?

AluliMeyer, 2008:

Spirituality and Knowing: the cultural context of knowledge (Finding knowledge and educates)

That which feeds our soul and our spirit (We are worth and our awareness of how to exist with it extends from this idea)

The cultural nature of the senses: expanding our ideas of empiricism (Our senses are culturally shaped, offering us distinct pathways to reality)

Relationship and knowledge: self through other (Knowing something is bound to how we develop a relationship with it)

Unity and knowledge: ideas of wealth and usefulness (Function is vital with regard to knowing something)

Words and knowledge: causality in language (Intention shapes our language and creates our reality)

The body/mind question: the illusion of separation (Knowing is embodied and in union with cognition)

Manolo, 2016:

Create new forms of knowledge (Embrace the non-linguistic; invent by combining things, media)

Practical thinking (Don't be afraid of philosophy)

Make beyond the object (Work the work; art is a way)

Dwell in the transversal (keep moving)

Be speculatively pragmatic (Enjoy the process; focus on the here and now as well as the unknown) - Whitehead

Invent beyond technique (Activate the more-than; methods for living not curating lives) - Kant

Metamodel (Make it an event; radical empiricism in action)

Render formative forces (Create a platform for relation)

Create alter-economies of value (value emergence)

Activate new forms of life (Invent at the interstices)

## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter delves into the project's research design. First, it sets forth its aims and revisits the research question. Then, it critically outlines the research paradigm and methodology, with particular attention paid to the methods chosen to foster contemplation and interconnection through multisensorial installation practices. I formulate why they have been selected and the approaches to navigate the objectives of my research-creation.

### AIMS

This research project aims to explore creative practice as a mode of inquiry, seeking ways to bridge the philosophical and aesthetic concepts of slow cinema with multisensory spaces of collective engagement. It endeavours to make the experiences of the maker of an installation relatable to viewers, and by combining content and form to realise the work as an experience rather than a representation. This exploration aims to activate complex, situated, and subjective truths by probing gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

How might an installation explore tropes of slow cinema in relation to contemplation and interconnectedness by means of multisensory spaces of collective engagement?

The research is situated in an interpretative, abductive research paradigm. As a practitioner, I embrace an insider's perspective that values the researcher's subjective position and experience.

I follow an emancipatory approach by emphasising women's voices and conducting the research as a *Tauiwi* or *Tangata Tiriti* – a good treaty partner, respectful of anti-oppressive and indigenous values. The qualitative methodology and methods I apply are shaped by Craig Batty and Susan Karrigan's essay collection on *creative practice as a mode of inquiry* (2018), foregrounding theories, models, and tools within screen production research. In particular, Bettina Frankham (2019)'s work on *spaces of engagement* and Smiljana Glisovič (2018)'s use of *poetic intelligence*, leaning on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1980), inspire and inform my exploration.

Philosopher-artist Erin Manning's (2014) propositions for *research-creation* and *thoughts in the act* (2016; with Brian Massumi) provide a framework for *transformative knowledge production*, while Manulani Aluli Meyer (2008) offers an *indigenous epistemology connecting body, mind, and spirit*. I am drawn to *a/r/tography* as a methodological approach for *socially engaged art*. Significantly, Stephanie Springgay (2022) inspires interdisciplinary and dynamic practices by *interconnecting artmaking/researching/teaching*.

Susan Kozel (2008, 2014) and Claire Bishop (2014) provide language for *phenomenological reflection on interactive installation art*, while Laura U. Marks (2000) addresses *haptic visibility and embodiment*, offering insights for *intercultural research practice*.

## METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The overarching methodology is practice-led research; a/r/tography and multi-sensory interactions with phenomena act as umbrella approaches, as well. More concretely, I selected experimenting with video installation, contemplating and sensing, clay sculpting, and improvising and live performance. Experimenting with video installation engages multiple senses, creating immersive experiences and enabling complex, layered narratives. This approach also explores spatial dynamics and can incorporate interactive elements, fostering audience engagement and participation. Contemplating and sensing promote deep reflection and embodied knowledge, aligning with phenomenological methodologies. These practices enhance mindfulness and presence, contributing to more original and thoughtful insights while fostering awareness. Clay sculpting provides a tactile, hands-on experience that deepens understanding of materiality and form. The therapeutic nature of sculpting supports mental well-being, while the embodied creativity leads to unique insights that might not emerge through intellectual methods. Improvisation and live performance encourage spontaneity and innovation, creating dynamic interactions with other participants and audiences. This method involves the whole body in the creative process, fostering collaborative creativity and immediate feedback, enriching the research-creation project.

Collectively, these diverse methods contribute to a balanced and refined approach to my research-creation, enriching both the process and the outcomes. In the following, I will critically reflect on these methods as I apply them.

Phenomenology can help overcome three unhelpful divides. The first unhelpful divide is that between theory and practice; the second between mind and body; and the third between solitary experience and shared experiences  
(Kozel, 2008, 4:08).

Subjective thought gives us the green light to engage in creative exploration needed to unburden ourselves from the shrivelled promise objectivity has offered the world  
(Aluli Meyer, 2008, p.228).





## 5 CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON RESEARCH-CREATION

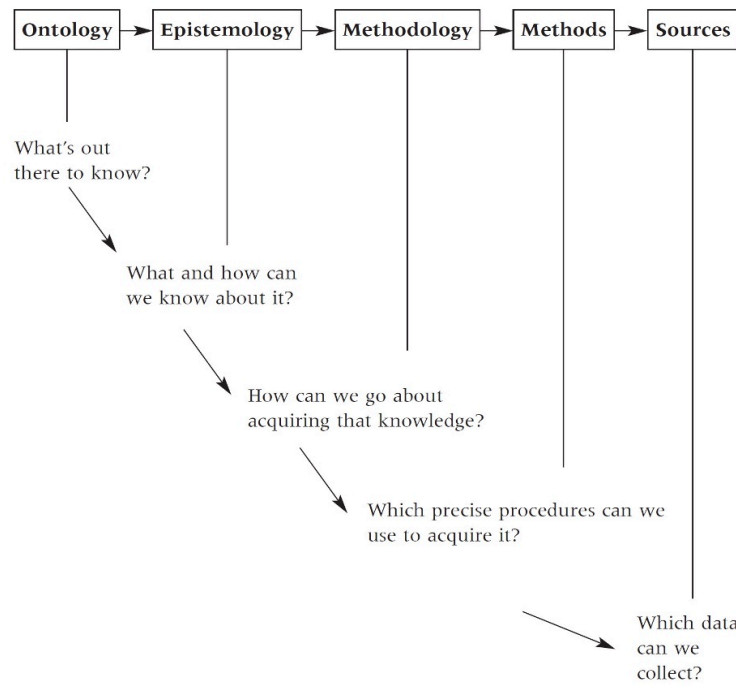
## 5 CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON RESEARCH-CREATION

In this chapter, I narrate the evolution of my practice, discuss the methods in action and reflect upon the discoveries I made during the creative process.

### EXPERIMENTING WITH VIDEO INSTALLATION, PART 1

My “go to” as well as “go out” practice is photography and videography. For decades, it has been a semi-professional tool for me to engage with the world. It feels like “aroha mai aroha atu” (love towards me, love going out from me.) My aim for this practice-led research project was to reach another dimension. I wanted to explore the possibility to go large, three dimensional, expand in space, immerse myself and others in images to create a shared contemplative space. At first, I envisioned that it would be fairly easy to categorically and intuitively tap into my large library, maybe produce some new footage, and create a montage in a poetic documentary so I treated the content part as secondary. My main focus was learning more about video art in an installation setting. I created different folders on my computer and pages in my private website and filled them with a lot of intriguing examples. I looked them through again and again, studied how they were made, and created sub-categories of different styles. I noticed that I have a tendency for collecting, gleaning, hoarding, and sorting. I realised this could be considered a method, too. I also wondered if my image collections could be data, an archive, a resource, or a source of some sort.

Batty and Kerrigan (2018) refer to Jonathan Grix (2002) in their critical discussion about creative practice as a mode of inquiry. His figure below describes the “interrelationship between the building blocks of social research” (p.22):



**Figure 31:** Grix, 2002. Interrelationship between the building blocks of social research.

Grix is an advocate for question-led research, and I too kept developing my research questions. Earlier versions included chronopolitics, slowness, immersive, a/r/tography. Over the course of a semester, I exchanged these words as I saw my focus shift or sharpen. An interesting twist is that practice-led research is by nature method-led and hence travels from right to left on Grix’s model. Then again, it is the question(s) which refine the methods in an iterative process. Like Glisovič (2021) describing her journey as a naïve researcher resisting methodology, I used images to develop a clearer idea about where to go, what, how, and why (p.403).

I followed my instinct, and got two portable projectors from the loan central and I started doing rudimentary screening tests in the first few month of my thesis. I thought about the number of panels, scale, light quality, superimposing, and different surfaces, from very small to very large, such as the palm of my hand, across the walls and ceilings in my home, curtains, beddings, to the water tank and neighbour's house wall outside, envisioned giving trees a coat of white paint to carry the moving images, or using the sandy beach or the surface of the ocean as natural canvases. I was talking with people in the industry, a few at university, and inquiring online to get a better understanding of requirements, involving time, labour, and cost, I also considered using LED screens and involving QR codes as a way for viewers to access videos on their own devices.



In the subsequent phase, my focus shifted towards delving deeper into content. Having gained a better understanding of the concepts of slow cinema and video installation art, I found myself simultaneously inspired and overwhelmed by the myriad of possibilities. Browsing through my extensive collection of images and videos, I hoped to find resonant pieces that could spark or amalgamate into a narrative. However, with over four hundred thousand visual assets accumulated over the years, the task seemed daunting. Auggie's advice in "Smoke" (Jarvis, 2020, p. 5) echoed in my mind: "You'll never get it if you don't slow down, my friend."

In response, I embarked on a journey of introspection and contemplation. The term poetic intelligence was coined by the poet Louise Glück (1994), deriving its energy from a willingness to discard anything (Glisovič, p.219). She encouraged an encounter with the unknown. Humphreys (2013) calls it an unearthing of being, a process of disengaging from established frameworks, a deterritorialization that is becoming (p.13). All three scholars lean on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of rhizomatic learning. In their seminal book, *A 1000 Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they introduce the approach in contrast to arborescent thinking which relies on hierarchy, linearity, categorisation, and goal-orienting. A rhizome is a subterranean plant stem which sends out roots and shoots everywhere creating a wide net (ibid). Glisovič also quoted Walter Benjamin (1928) who encouraged people to avoid pushing thought along well-worn grooves (p.214).

I took a deliberate pause from producing new video and photo material. Instead, I immersed myself in the natural elements, seeking to "feel, see, and hear more" in the hope of distilling essential "truths", needs, and emotions. Susan Kozel (2008) warned

in "Closer" that such moments of phenomenological reflections could yield insights or frustrations or nothing... mirroring the complexities of life itself.

Contemplating and sensing became integral practices in my creative process. To remember some of my guides' language, especially Aluli Meyer's and Manning's, I created visually appealing reminders with their propositions, printed them out, hang them up and read them like daily mantras.

Regular walks along the serene beaches of Waiheke Island became part of my artistic process. Fittingly, a huge community-initiated billboard down by the harbour saying **SLOW DOWN YOU'RE HERE** welcomes its residents and visitors with. I also joined a local improv theatre group provided avenues for regular introspection, movement, play, observation, fun, inspiration, and a growing sense of trust in the "just being."

Immersed in nature, I connected with the present moment, allowing my senses to guide me. Embracing disorientation as advocated or passed on by Glisovič (p.213) – leaning on Louise Glück, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980), Nigel Thrift, and Walter Benjamin (1936) – I found solace in the unknown, fostering a more dynamic and open-ended learning process. The act of slowing down – by myself and in the group – emptying, deeply sensing, listening, breathing through beyond boredom and discomfort, mindfully and intuitively noticing without grasping on, and embracing complexity has become a practice for contemplation.

Sometimes while strolling along the beach in an "artist's way" (Cameron, 1994), or drawing, I would pause and carefully and sustainably pick up a natural object "that speaks to me", I hold it lightly, be with it, ponder, then release it again, or I carry some of the matter (and spirit) home and keep it for a while.

These introspective walks led to a pivotal realisation: the desire to create "islands of contemplation" with and for others, a place to wander and wonder. Inspired by Frankham's (2020) approach, I sought to combine form and content in a multisensory video and object installation that would evoke a contemplative experience.

Invigorated by walking, I looked at my picture collection again. This time around, I strongly gravitated towards a photo depicting a child's handprint in clay. It looked like an oyster shell from the beach. I was enthusiastic. It was a symbol of familial ties as it was moulded by my nephew; and I was intuitively prompted toward my next working method.

Drawing upon Laura U. Marks' (2020) insights on haptic visuality (p.xii), I recognised the potential of incorporating clay sculpting into my video installation. This fusion of mediums offered a multisensory experience, resonating with viewers on a physical and emotional level. The metaphorical richness of sculpting with clay, inspired by Tarkovsky's cinematic philosophy of sculpting with time, provided a compelling vehicle to advance my research-creation journey.

Furthermore, I felt touched, moved, and seen by Marks as she unearthed cinema as a multisensory and embodied art form, highlighting how it affects viewers on a physical and emotional level beyond just visual perception. Moreover, she argues that many new works in film and video call upon memories of the senses to represent the experiences of people living in the diaspora (xi). This struck a chord with my own sense of displacement and longing for belonging. It also spanned a bridge to *Nostalgia* (1983), Tarkovsky's penultimate film, produced in exile. Before reading Marks, I had organised a public screening of this masterpiece at the Waiheke movie theatre. I wanted to connect with likeminded people who share a passion for slow cinema. I


have watched this film several times in my life and I am always perplexed how (sadly) timely it is. **Freedom is useless if you don't have the courage to look us in the eye** (Tarkovsky, 1985, 1:48).<sup>1</sup>

Third party copyright material:

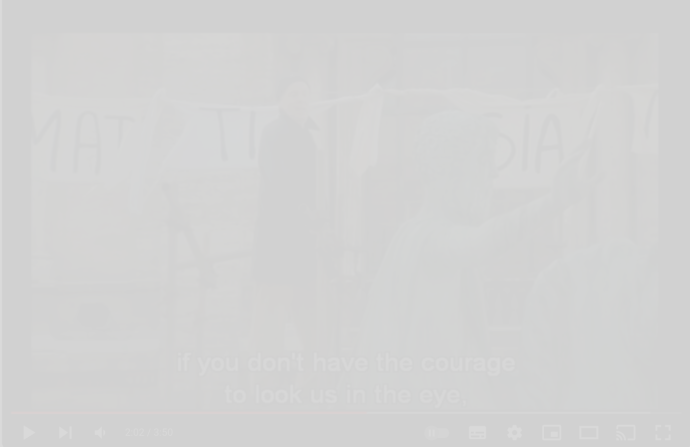
Three screenshots from *Nostalgia*, a slow cinema film by Andrey Tarkovsky (1983), depicting Domenico's speech.



Society must become united again



Freedom is useless



if you don't have the courage  
to look us in the eye

<sup>1</sup> See Domenico's final speech in Tarkovsky's 1983 film *Nostalgia*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPStKitYWDs>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JikGhqQh4c4> (1:48/2:05)

In this section, I offer insights into my personal journey, experiences, and creative processes as they intersect with my practice of clay sculpting. Central to my research-creation is an embodied, sensory, and interconnected approach. Sculpting with clay has become a method that has deeply influenced my practice in art and design.

During the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown, I found solace and inspiration in an anthroposophical online workshop exploring Rudolf Steiner's concept of "the four temperaments." Rooted in ancient philosophy and adapted by psychologists and personality theorists, this framework provided a lens through which to explore raw emotions and tendencies. As part of the workshop, I engaged in various sensory and holistic activities, including eurythmy movement, speech and drama, aquarelle painting, felting, and food preparation but it was sculpting with clay and bee's wax that resonated with me most profoundly.

The sculpting sessions, each corresponding to a temperament, offered a quiet and meditative space for introspection and expression. Through gestures guided by elemental qualities, such as shaping the clay with playful pinching motions of the fingertips for the sanguine temperament (joyful, light-hearted, airy), pushing with a strong thumb only for the choleric temperament (wilful, less sensing, fiery), gentle rubbing with the little finger and the side of the hand for the melancholic temperament (deep feeling, dragging, aware of stickiness and heaviness, earthy element), or calmly palming for the phlegmatic temperament (going more inward, not so much outward, digestive, surrounding shapes like water), I found a deep connection in these clay-forming gestures to the material and my inner landscape. These sessions were transformative, allowing me to explore and embody different emotional states tangibly and viscerally.

The accompanying workshop information on the four temperaments emphasised the significance of the hand and, ultimately and fundamentally, societies in sensing and shaping the world (Steiner, 1909) – a notion that resonated deeply with me as I navigated the uncertainties of the pandemic transferable to other personal and global issues. The act of sculpting became a metaphor and tool, allowing to pause, feel, and shape responses amidst chaos and stress.

Since then, I have continued to incorporate clay sculpting into my daily practice, finding comfort and inspiration in the tactile and contemplative process. Whether shaping clay or moulding natural modelling wax, I am reminded of the power of touch and the interconnectedness of soul and universe. This practice-led exploration has not only informed my research-creation but it has also become a source of grounding and reflection in my daily life.

I began to see clay sculpting and internal, emotional sensing as a foundational aspect of my creative process. Through this practice, I explore the intersections of art, philosophy, embodiment, and sensory perception, inviting viewers to engage with the materiality of the work and to reflect on their own experiences of presence and connection, or in Frankham. (2019)'s words, "to explore gaps and tensions present within the material and themselves".

Time is not just a measure but a malleable substance that can be shaped and moulded to express the filmmaker's vision and ideas, the exploration of existential themes, the relationship between past and present, and the subjective experience of time. The essence of filmmaking lies in its ability to create temporal sculptures, arranging and structuring time in a way that evokes deeper emotions and meanings (Tarkovsky, 1985, p.61).

Installation art introduced a new mode of modelling materials which took space as its material.  
(Vial & Coëllier, 2021, p.xix).



## EXPERIMENTING WITH VIDEO INSTALLATION, PART 2

In this phase, I made concrete decisions about the content to feature in my video installation, the spatial arrangements, and some elements or stations/acts/islands of the multisensory collective space. Drawing inspiration from my experiences on my beach walks and symbolic material encounters, I aimed to capture the uninterrupted and unhurried flow of walking as is often depicted in slow cinema. I asked my daughter, who is an actor, if I could film her when she returned back home from London for two months in the summer of 2023-2024. This creative exchange became almost a rite of passage as she had just left the 'nest'. I took a de-dramatised approach, without storyline. I filmed her from the back or blurred and obscured. Keeping subjects anonymous allowed me to maintain an observational mode and bypass the need for university ethics approval. I envisioned creating a multi-panel video installation stretching mundane scenes across a calm panoramic landscape format.

To get access to a test space, I approached the local Waiheke Community Theatre in late 2023. My proposal to develop an interactive and multisensory event in the style of a walk-through experience was met with open ears. I was offered two dates in January 2024 alongside some funding. I dared to suggest that the exhibition event would be "in combination with live performances" although it seemed pretty vague at the time. Despite my initial uncertainty, I was emboldened by my connections with thespians and previous art happenings. Mainly, I felt motivated by Manning (2014) and Aluli Meyer (2008) "to make it an event, focus on relationship, body/mind, keep moving, focus on the unknown, radical empiricism in action, create a platform for relation, value emergence, invent at the interstices."

Having a tangible space to work with allowed me to develop site-specific/-conditioned art. I was drawing on my home-made experience in interior design and renovation and my educational expertise in creating interdisciplinary learning modules. I designed diverse programmes aimed at engaging students in Secondary and Primary Schools. Especially 'Werkstattunterricht' in Switzerland is a well-established experiential and pedagogical method. I developed extensive practical, interdisciplinary, multisensory, and interactive teaching/learning modules on different topics. The key was to build a diverse discovery program students engage in over weeks which stimulates the head, heart, and hand, fostering self and team responsibility and management. This was a role that now came in handy.

Analysing spatial possibilities, I sought immersive opportunities to enhance the interactive and multisensory aspects of the installation. While the term immersive initially resonated, I later favoured interactive and multisensory to encompass a broader range of experiences beyond virtual reality. It was not my goal to lose the sense of self often affiliated with virtual reality but rather the opposite of gaining radical self-awareness inherent in slow cinema. This informed the contemplative, multisensory, and interactive elements of the installation. I am somewhat guided by museums pedagogy and science communication (in particular from the 'Stapferhaus', a foundation I saw develop from humble beginnings to winning the 'European museum of the year award in 2020.) Motivated to create a 'Stapferhaus'-inspired interactive and interdisciplinary art space, I put in an application to get a spot in the 2024 'sculpture on the gulf' exhibition on Waiheke Island. For this, I investigated the area where the exhibition was going to be held in a contemplative manner. I was location scouting, sensing and feeling out the trails, views, and buildings along the way to host a 'slow down you're here' video installation. I found an abandoned ship container and shed

which suited my vision and with this developed a project design. While I was not among the successful contestants, I built up confidence to adapt the material and show a proposal to another art provider on the island, the Waiheke Community Theatre. This people, space and time aligned. The manager and the board liked my ideas and gave me some funds and the freedom to create two shows.

## CONTEMPLATING AND SENSING, AGAIN

It felt serendipitous when in the same week, I met a person who pursued doctoral studies on emotions and food. At a communal cooking event I attended, she shared her personal ‘madeleine effect’ story about a dish that triggered childhood memories of her grandmother in the Middle East, that evoked a wave of emotions from sheer joy to inconsolable tears before she finished the pastry. I approached her to contribute to my test show/research-creation practice focused on evoking effects through smell and taste. We shared a lot of stories from our intercultural and academic experiences, and eventually we decided to offer a kind of falafel and bliss balls with various spices – sweet, soothing, hot – reflecting the complex mix of emotions people experience. We aimed for an almost zero-waste event, serving food in bowls made from local Waiheke clay, aligning perfectly with my passion for sculpting. Over the next few months, we met weekly to shape around 200 thumb bowls. I also created videos of her sculpting with clay. This collaboration, during a difficult time when she was affected by the war between Hamas and Israel, was a bittersweet highlight of this research-creation process.

During this time, my focus shifted to social justice engagement, mainly due to yet another escalated conflict on the world stage, and partly due to a professional development course I was enrolled in as a teacher which by coincidence happened at the same time. It was about restorative justice narratives at school, supported by the University of Waikato and the NZ Peace Foundation. During the workshop, I was re-introduced to Amanda Gorman’s poem *The Hill We Climb* (2021). It contains these words:

We've learnt that quiet isn't always peace, and the norms and notions of  
what 'just is' isn't always justice.

Themes started to merge. It became effortless to weave together art making with inputs from my research in slow cinema and from teaching. With an affinity for wordplays <sup>2</sup>, I borrowed 'just is' and justice for my own practice and connected it with 'response-ability', leaning on Rohr's (1987) aforementioned reflections on contemplation and action, responding and reacting. This again goes – according to international and classroom conflicts all over the world – hand in hand or rather hand against hand with over-reacting and escalating. <sup>3</sup> My thoughts and wishes were that by individually contemplating what just is in one's mind, body, and spirit, and respectfully listening to what just is in someone else's mind, body, and spirit that then maybe 'we-identity' becomes more than just another wordplay.

In *Feltness and A/r/tography* Springgay (2021; 2008 with Irwin) discuss enabling constraints by delimiting process and possibility, noting emergences and reworking emergences (not emergencies), focusing on creating more-than-representations, expanding on self as artist/researcher/teacher to groups and communities coming together to engage in shared living inquiries. They describe thinking in the act and movement, saturated with rhythm and affect, and keeping the practice speculative (p.16; 33). Looking at possibilities on how to incorporate socially engaged art and affective pedagogies, I adapted an exercise from the restorative justice training called

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<sup>2</sup> In my personal documentary short film *Monodidi* (2012), the words "a part and apart" as well as "alone and all one" helped me develop the screenplay. Another time, a dance therapist told me of her pondering to call her company *AccepDance*. Obviously, these words are language-bound and lose their effect when translated. The French drama film *Mon Roi* (2015) stages a life-changing ski injury of the main character's knee, in French "genou", to psychologically embody the broken relationship between a couple respectively me-us (je-nous) which is homophone.

<sup>3</sup> I first came across the word "response-ability" in a promoted teaching resource on a Swiss educators' platform in 2023. Serendipity, or creatively making use of things which pop up, has played a role a few times in this research-creation. An attempt to locate the origin of this wordplay, so far brought me to Charles Bacon (1990), a Professor of Education in the US.

the 'truth mandala ritual' for my *Just-is* event at Waiheke Artworks Theatre (2024). Originally, participants created a symbolic containment vessel for sharing their truths using four objects: a stone, dry leaves, a wooden stick, and an empty bowl. Each object invited participants to express their emotions creating a purifying experience, which aligned with the clay work I did regarding the four anthroposophic temperaments:

This stone stands for is for fear. Our heart feels tight, contracted, hard. With this stone, we can face, hold, and let our fear speak. In so doing, individuals also show the trust and courage it takes to speak out in a fear-phobic society. The dry leaves represent our sorrow. There is great sadness within us for what we see happening in our world. Here the sadness is acknowledged and blessed. The sorrow is in equal measure love as we only mourn what we deeply care for. The stick symbolizes anger and outrage. It needs to be recognised for clarity of mind and purpose. People are encouraged to grasp this stick hard with both hands without pounding or waving it around. And here we realize that the anger we express has its source in our passion for justice. In the fourth quadrant, the empty bowl stands for our sense of deprivation and need, our hunger for what's missing. Its emptiness is to be honored. To be empty allows space for the new to arise (Macy, 2014).

Discovering that I could attach another purpose to our carefully crafted clay food bowls was thrilling. I thought It was a beautiful opportunity to include a creatively and consciously altered and openminded version of this ritual into my contemplative, multisensory test show as part of my practice development. Claire Bishop (2012) wrote extensively on installation and participatory art, revealing some shocking 'happenings' where unaware viewers-turned-participants were played with and let down in the name of art, hence the title of her book *Artificial Hells* (p.97).

My goal throughout my practice and now in the physical realm of the collective web was one of introspection and connection so I wanted to invite the visitors onto a similar path by inviting them to intuitively pick up an object which speaks to them, be with it for a while, and place it within a shared space basically building a threefold installation together. Being sensitive to different cultural symbolism for spirited natural objects/beings, I opted to not name the affiliated emotions but to let visitors/participants attach their own meaning if they decided to choose a rock, leaf, stick, or bowl.

EXPERIMENTING WITH VIDEO INSTALLATION, PART 3:  
IMPROVISING AND LIVE PERFORMANCE – CONTEMPLATING IN ACTION

My exhibition event at Artworks Waiheke Community Theatre, titled *JUST-IS* took place on the 12th and 13th January, 2024.<sup>4</sup> As the art director and filmmaker, I curated and co-created the walk-through experience-show-exhibition. The thematic question posed to the public was: "In a time of complexity and overwhelm, can one achieve a sense of 'just is'? Can slowing down and connecting with others and one's own emotions bring peace and even justice? What is your 'response-ability'?"

I was delighted when a talented team of eight artists responded to my call, including five actors, an improv dancer, a musician, a maze artist, and a chef. Some actors were recruited from a short play festival held two months earlier. Passion for the craft, topic, artistic and collaborative style, people, community, and cause (all proceeds were going to Médecins sans Frontières), as well as clear communication and self-initiative helped us overcome challenges, including juggling the festive holiday schedule. Together, we created two nights of live performance art, dance and music, and a multisensory video installation that wove together elements of film, sound, food, clay sculpting into a contemplative interactive and experience.

Why did I include actors and live performance artists in the installation, along with audience-participants from the community, and why did I join an improv group?

---

<sup>4</sup> With the wisdom of hindsight, I would not again choose to be a creative director with as many hats on during this busy season even though the creative practice eventually yielded beautiful results, was both fun and contemplative. Some end of year and new year reflections and intentions might have added some beautiful layers for people involved. However, I was also very fortunate to have a supportive theatre manager and technician.

According to Claire Bishop (2012), analysing the installation work of artist and writer Dan Graham (e.g. *The Two-Way Mirror*, 1976) this might be rooted in Jacques Lacan's (1949) psychoanalytical concept of the formation of the function of the I: "Our sense of self is just an imaginary construct, a defence against our internal sense of fragmentation. (...) The ego is structured as an effect of an external or reciprocal world gaze, the world looking back at us (p.72 - 73). I already came across this framework in my teachers' education programme in regards of development stages in children, as well as during my research for my documentary short film *Monodidi* about my twin identity (2012). Unconsciously, it might have been exactly this essence of self-encounter when looking at the photograph with the handprint in clay, mirroring inner and outer landscapes that helped to formulate the reciprocal concept for *Just-is*.

On a more practical level, working with actors and live performance artists brings me joy and develops my own practice by engaging emotionally, mentally, culturally, and spiritually. A deeply sensed conception of mine is that people love watching people. Having involved 'extras' enhances the immersive experience for the audience, creates a dynamic and interactive environment that exhibitions alone cannot achieve. Secondly, the presence of live performers added a narrative element to the installation, providing deeper engagement and understanding of 'being in the moment', checking on with emotions and ways to respond. Furthermore, actors and performance artists (musician, dancer/mover) could adapt and respond in real-time to the audience's reactions, making each visitor's experience unique and personal. They expand the spatial dimensions and temporal dimensions within the event and installation, further enriching the overall exploration, impact, and likely significance.

Graham (1999, cited in Bishop, 2020) objected to the solitary and meditative nature of some installations (for example, he mentions the *Light and Space* installations developed in California in the 1960s). He was adamant that:

The world could not be experienced as pure presence because it paralleled consumerist amnesia with the “just past” being repressed in favour of the new. The perceptual process should instead be understood as a continuum spanning past, present, and future (p.73).

I talked about this with “my” actors giving inspiration to deeply connect with how time and timing affects their roles and narrative and vice versa. While I fully credit their development of characters, I was excited that there were representatives of different eras from the 19th to the 20th Century. Frankham (2019) discusses combined form and content, in a relevant way to this event, where viewers according to Frankham (2019) could be prompted to explore gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves.

In the video installation, I projected a montage of filmed and found footage (described later) onto eight large cotton sheets, creating extended canvases. After preparing clips in Final Cut Pro, I finetuned the two eight-minute loops on the front and right side walls. I balanced the scene with two almost still moving images on the top left wall, and screened a separate video in the entrance.

Additionally, I created cyanotypes on large silk fabrics, to be installed in the main area, as well as photo prints on transparent paper for the entrance glass doors. During my research/inquiry stage of visually and technically analysing artworks by others, I learnt to tell apart and play with printed screens versus for video projections. I found layering

exciting, screened videos that shine through several curtain like fabrics of different material and thickness, or printed material with create superimposed images. The cyanotypes featured enlarged photos of my adult daughter's facial expressions. Although they were blurred and distorted they were still recognisable and contained highly dramatic emotion. I still used them during my pre-show advertising materials, but later I filmed and displayed expressive hand and feet gestures. Hands and feet are more transferable and subtle to connect with, on the other hand they did not excite me as much as human faces. However I would have needed ethics approval to include identities. I ruminated on including animals like dogs but could not make up my mind as how this might be perceived though I did employ new footage of snails.

Like clay, the silk and cotton fabrics evoke strong sensation, touching the material and seeing it on film elicits haptic visuality (Marks, 2000). Both the dancer and the person in the video wrapped themselves in the same silk cloth used for cyanotypes, enhancing the relationship between the elements in the space. This repeated feature, combined with the human touch and memory of it, created my personal 'pièce de résistance'. Even after the show, I can feel/remember the warmth of my daughter's body in it as she carried the fabric along the beach, hear the gentle flapping in the wind, and keep seeing the unrealised idea of projecting onto long fabric panels flying in the wind. The maze, created with chalk and sand, acted as another continuous symbolic feature as well as touch sense activator throughout the walk-through and resting experience.

The timeframe of two hours allowed the audience to settle in the different offered multisensory spaces of collective engagement. The all-surrounding set-up of the slow-paced videos in a shared space with clay sculpting and incorporated live performances

was at the heart of the installation. The suspended entry to the theatre space through a darkened and detoured side path offered a limited sense-scape preparing and allowing the visitor to drop into an introspective, contemplative, and interconnected mode. I gently guided and mellowed this experience by playing the amplified sound of a gentle heartbeat through hidden speakers. The association with a sacred womb space was shared a few times by visitors afterwards.



This section describes all the aspects of *Just-is* and my practice in more detail. The Artworks Community Theatre on Waiheke Island offered a variety of stations in an intimate atmosphere where the visitors could engage in an introspective and collective space and journey. There were two paid evening shows on 12 and 13 January 2024, each one attracting about 35 people.

Gulf News, 5 January 2024

WHAKANGAHAU / WHAT'S ON

33

## JUST-IS transforms Artworks Theatre for immersive happening



Bobi Lauper Tisch with her cyanotype on silk featuring Lea Nova by Saff Michele. Photo Liza Hamilton



Kashmir Postel, manager of Artworks Community Theatre features in JUST-IS as a creative subject on screen. Photo Femke Overmaat

Audiences will be invited to walk, touch, look, listen and taste at an immersive event called JUST-IS (Justice) planned for Artworks Theatre on 12 and 13 January.

Geared towards mature audiences, people are encouraged to wander and wonder through a series of stations for a multisensory and interactive experience with video installations and live performance art, exploring a range of emotions.

Creative director Bobi Lauper Tisch, has collaborated with a host of island artists for the event and together they ask: "In a time of complexity and overwhelm, can one get into a sense of 'just is', and can slowing down and getting in touch with others' and one's own emotions bring some peace and even justice? What is your 'respons-ability'?"

The guided walk-through show will feature mazes indoors and outside, improv dancers, actors, and musicians. When people come in, they will be handed an object and - in Waiheke style - asked to "slow down" for some creative pondering in the animated side corridor before entering the stage area where large video installations immerse the visitors.

"There will also be a sort-of maker's table where you can go into a sculpting activity with a few instructions, while ac-



"Ceci n'est pas une coquille!" - This is not a shell, but clay in the palm of a hand, a symbol for the inner and outer world. Photo Bea Lauper

tors perform and interact in different stations," says Bobi. "These performance artists present topics such as domestic life and the future of AI through the 'just-is' lens. The various islands of contemplation - ngā motu huritao - also offer food in special bowls from the island." Audiences are asked to watch out for different emotional triggers.

Bobi, a school teacher and filmmaker, takes a cross-disciplinary approach in both education and art. She is currently studying in the Master of Philosophy programme in design and art at AUT

and is particularly interested in practice-based research exploring conscious(ness) development in education and the philosophical aspects of chronopolitics. JUST-IS is a "test show" before her exhibition and exegesis at the university in June.

"Collaborating with local artists and reflecting on the essence of slowness and 'respons-ability' in a creative way has been a rewarding journey already," says Bobi. She hopes visitors will enjoy some wonderful activities and conversations, too. All proceeds raised from the event will go to Doctors Without Borders.

The actors, dancers, poets, musicians, clay sculptors, and food enthusiasts involved in JUST-IS include Renée Casserly, Lea Nova, Vanessa Carnevale, Avi Duckor-Jones, Hadas Ore, Darleen Tana, Koro Sciascia, Darcy McMahon, Charlie Grimsdale, Dan Tisch, and Rebecca Bee Gunson.

On Friday 12 January the show runs from 7pm to 9pm and on Saturday 13 it runs from 5pm to 7pm. For tickets go to [Artworkstheatre.org.nz](http://Artworkstheatre.org.nz) • Liza Hamilton

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GULF NEWS



Figure 47-81: Lauper, B. (2024). Just-Is [Installation]. Waiheke, Aotearoa, New Zealand

Outside on the spacious courtyard, the first thing visitors saw and engaged in was a huge maze drawn with chalk, leading from four entry points eventually to the entrance stairs where I placed a handmade replica of Waiheke's official welcome sign "slow down you're here" to get the audience into a contemplative mode.

To mark the start – and "bring in winds from all directions" representative for my two homes - I played a South-Pacific conch and a Swiss alphorn. A local kaumātua (Māori elder) interwove a karanga (call), and shared a kararkia (blessing), and information about the interactive walk-through exhibition.



Then, a dancer moved in the maze to a recorded piece of music and playfully incorporated mostly natural objects such as rocks, sticks, dry leaves, shells, water in a clay bowl, a silk towel, and a mirror, symbolising and triggering different sensations, emotions, and transformations (leaving space for individual interpretations.)





Eventually, she led the group inside, past the large glass doors where I had mounted stickers of enlarged faces and hands expressing different feelings such as surprise/fear, sadness, agony, anger, calmness, and joy.



In the foyer, people were prompted to pick up an object, as animated in the maze before, from various baskets on a table according to their sense of emotional state or choice of exploration. In addition, I had a bowl with "just ice". One after the other, visitors-turned-participants lined up to walk through a curtain door into the darkened sideway to the stage (detour)



To handle the traffic-jam situation, I had a large horizontal lightbox on a table where different words and quotes about slowness and "just is/justice" could be placed and overlaid.



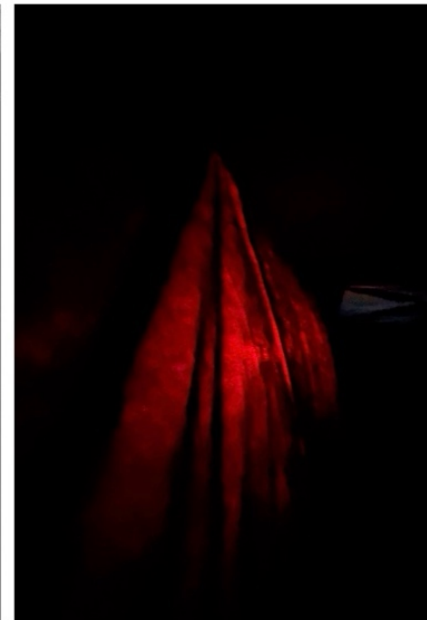
Furthermore, there was a video projected onto the sloping ceiling showing hands creating clay bowls. My friend and I moulded and burnt 100 of them from local earth as sustainable dishes for the food, as well as vessels for the adapted mindful "truth mandala" activity described below. Furthermore, I let a montage run of children (close to the pottery place; keeping them anonymous) looking at slow moving snails.



There was also food available, sort of a mixture of falafel-bliss balls with various spices from hot to sweet, again triggering as well as mixing different emotions. We changed from offering them for free at the start to being sold at the theatre bar left of the entrance (resp by the exit.) Some people may have bought them at this stage though most afterwards.



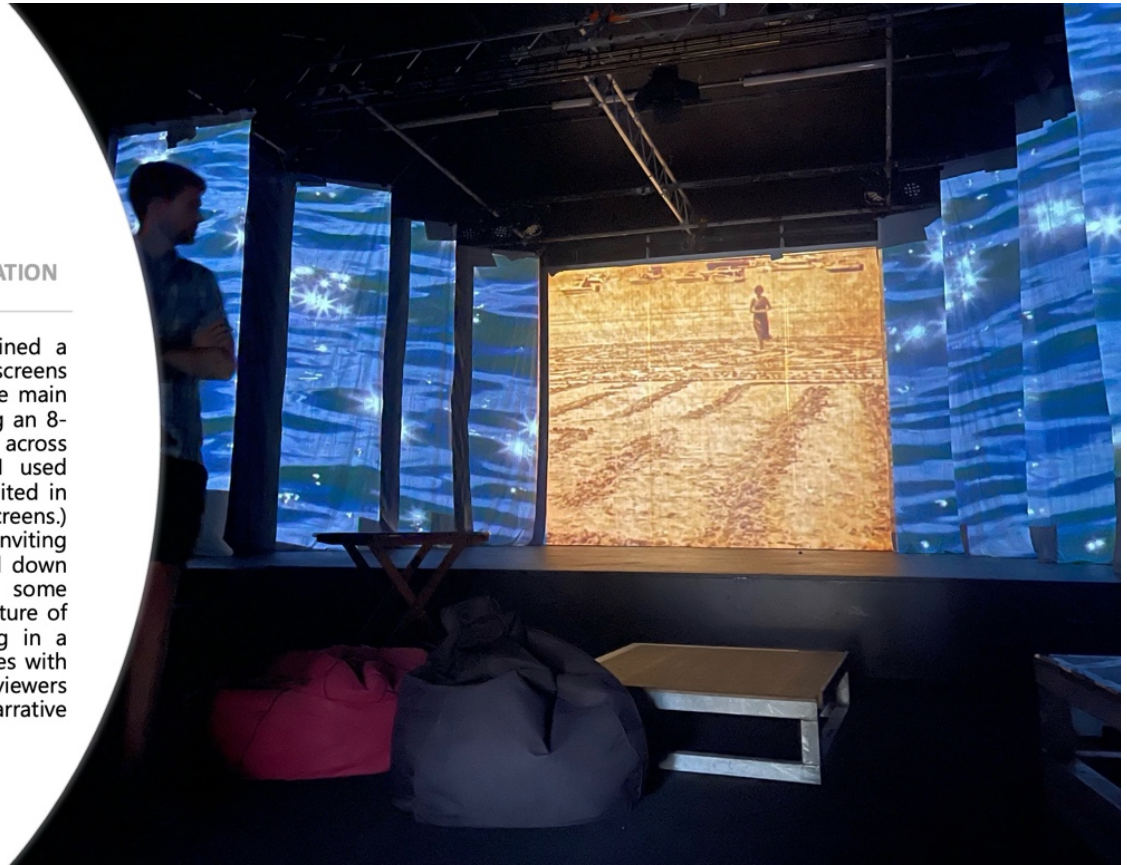
The dark hallway was about 7 m long and had a steady calm heartbeat sound in it. Everyone had to walk slowly and carefully, though in the second night it was hard to pause the crowd for more gaps. A faint red light at the end guided towards the side-doorway into the seating area. Piano music could be heard from there as well.



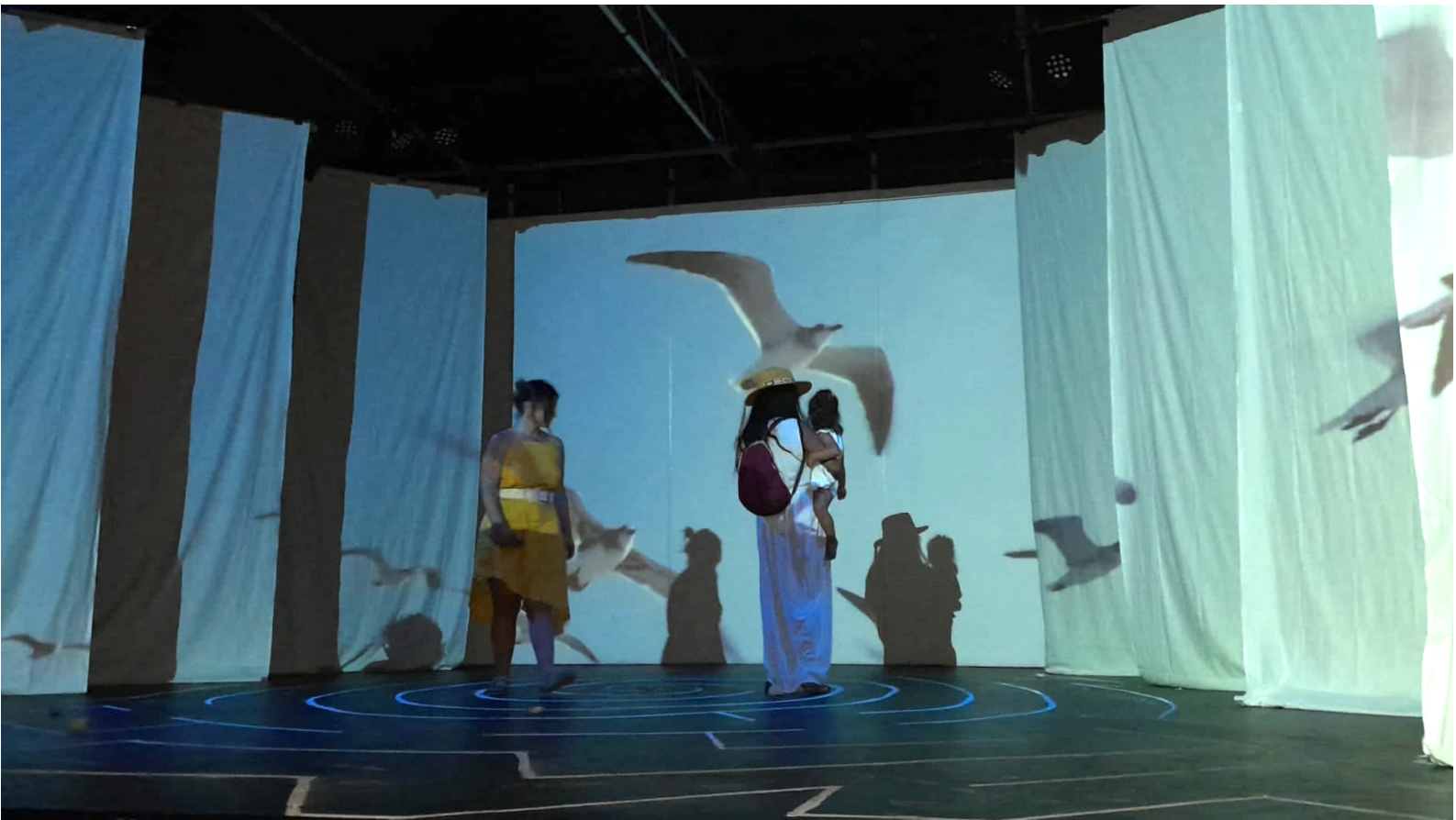
The gently lit theatre space, the stage plus the about six by twelve metres big seating area revealed four central elements: large-scale video installations, audio performance and sound installations, clay sculpting/tactile interaction and creation, and live performance art/improv acting.

### THE IMMERSIVE VIDEO INSTALLATION

"The pièce de résistance" contained a series of eight large cloth screens arranged in a U-shape around the main fix screen on the stage, projecting an 8-minute looped video, sometimes across all panels, at times split up. (I used PowerPoint to adjust the clips edited in Final Cut Pro to fit the different screens.) The visuals acted like a portal, inviting the viewers to step into a slowed down world. The filmed footage with some digital animation contained a mixture of natural scenes, a person walking in a maze, obscured faces, and gestures with hands and feet, encouraging the viewers to construct their own narrative connections.









Beside one large projector, I had three smaller ones for the other three walls (see floor plan and video at the end): The opposite wall from where the people came through the door showed a set of eyes, quietly staring (perfectly adjusted with keystone) and blinking, on repeat; the wall to the right of the entrance had a wheel with names of different emotions, cut-out archetypal clay figures, and facial expressions (in blue matching a portrait I printed onto silk and hung up at the exit); and the wall above the piano on the left showed corresponding moving images to the main stage though with a different start and in a rounded shape (reduced because it would have otherwise highlighted electrical equipment in the theatre.)



**AUDIO PERFORMANCE:** There were two piano players improvising to the images and people's activities.



Additionally (and separately of the heartbeat in the hallway), there was a **SOUND INSTALLATION** in the bathroom. A hidden phone played four recordings depicting a joyful, sad, angry, and calm character reflecting on the show.)

#### **CLAY SCULPTING/TACTILE INTERACTION AND CREATION:**

The stage had a repeated spiral pattern of the outdoor maze on the ground. Quietly, the visitors followed the initially received invitation to mindfully place "their object", which they carried through the hallway, onto the stage resp into the maze where they felt drawn to. Once released, bean bags and pillows invited the guests to lounge in the seating area... to watch the scenes unfold but also to practically express with clay whatever sentiment they may have carried into the space or experiencing through the transformative manner and matter. Movement prompts encouraged them to mould quality clay (local and from other parts of NZ) by pressing/pushing into it with the thumb only (maybe expressing or triggering a sense of anger), or gently rubbing it with the side of the little finger and the elongated side of the hand (evoking a melancholic temperament), or joyfully and lightly, pinching the surface with index and thumb (inquisitive, happy), or calmly palming the material connecting outer and inner impressions (deeper feeling, reciprocal.) Again, these imprinted creations could be placed onto the maze on the stage.









PS: Improv dance at the start is part of this, too.

## LIVE PERFORMANCE ART /

### IMPROV ACTING:

I engaged 5 actors (all friends and professionals), shared keywords of my artistic research project and let them to it with minimal exchange: Two created a mundane and traditional home like a life-size diorama with a 50ies touch mixed with contemporary alternative vibes preparing food from scratch and crocheting. Another two, were on a bed "just being", laying in the duvet covers and pillows and at times getting off slowly squirming around or having a go on the nearby piano, too. A highlight turned out to be the character of a humanoid robot acting as an AI-museum assistant and interacting Ameca-like with the visitors. It created quite an awkward mix in a contained space, testing the audience a fair bit in their "responsibilities".

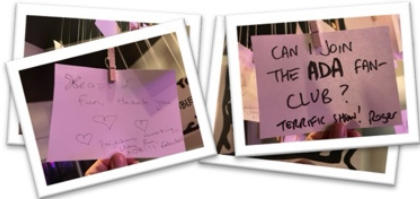


Animation by Lukas Moon



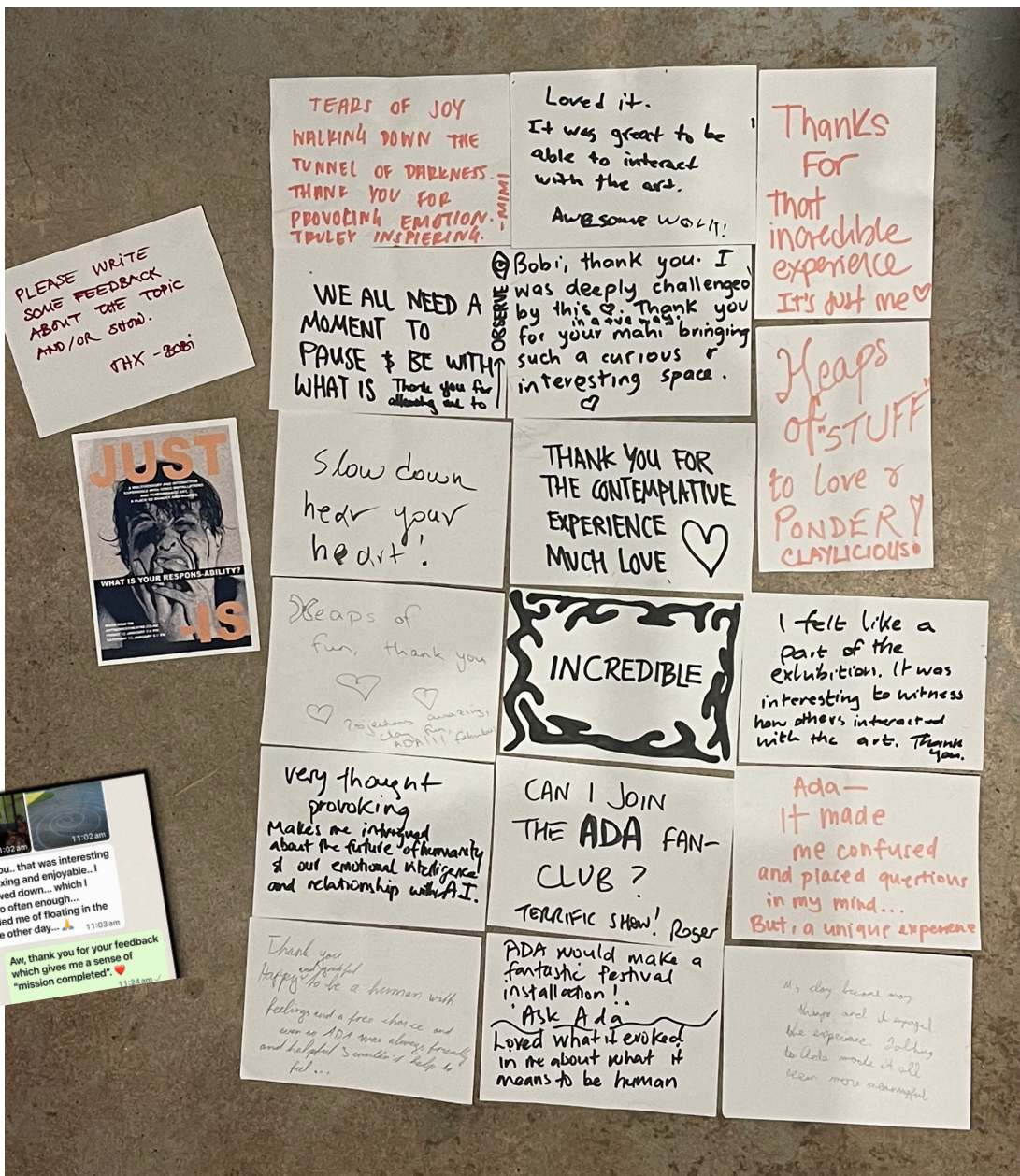


To my surprise, pretty much everyone stayed the full two hours, slowly moving around or staying put, engaging multiple senses, taking in several loops, sculpting all sorts of shapes out of clay, and likely loving observing others. They seemed to enjoy the shared creative space, quiet contemplations, and expressed imaginations – some comparing it on feedback notes to “floating in the sea which I should do more often”, “an incredibly funny and smart evening”, and “a surely multisensory experience with unexpected sights, sounds, light and dark, movement and interactions with humans, nature, and future AI robots... heaps of fun to be right in it and reflect on the act of participation.”



*B. Ingebrigtsen*

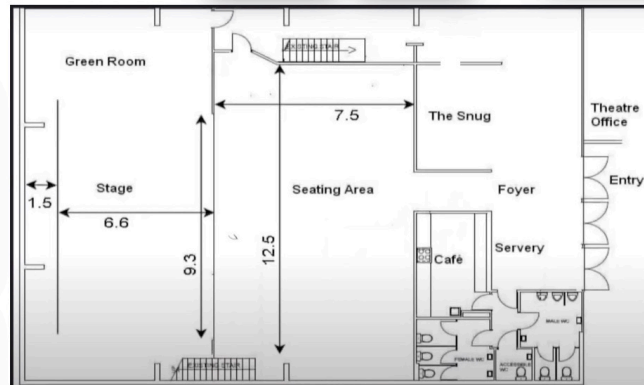
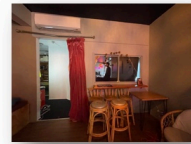
FEB 2024





Te whare tapere o Waiheke

FLOORPLAN/  
LOCATION STUDY  
NOV 2023



JUST-IS, VISION NOV 2023

**IMMERSIVE VIDEO INSTALLATION/ PROJECTIONS (BOBI + JAMIE)**

**PRINTED FABRICS (BOBI)**

**"TRUTH MANDALA"/MINDFUL ACTIVITY (VALIA?)**

**SLOW VIDEO PROJECTION (BOBI)**

**NEON SIGN AND POETIC MURMURING DARKNESS (BOBI)**

**THIRD PARTY COPYRIGHT MATERIAL: Video installation with a portrait projected onto a curtain**

**ARCHITECTURAL ANIMATIONS (DARCY)**

**PIANO IMPROV (RENEE + DAN)**

**EMOTIONAL FACES ON COPY MACHINE (BOBI)**

**LIGHTS (JAMIE)**

**PERFORMANCE ART: DANCE + ROBOT + DOMESTIC SPACE, RENEE, VANESSA, AVI, LEA, DARLEEN**

**FREE EMOTION MAPPING APP (ABBY)**

**VISITORS PAINTING FEELINGS ON PAPER ROLL (BOBI)**

**ARCHETYPAL VIDEO PORTRAITS (BOBI)**

**THIRD PARTY COPYRIGHT MATERIAL: Archetypes**

**TASTY SURPRISE FALAFEL IN HANDMADE WAIHEKE CLAY BOWLS (HADAS)**

**IMAGES ON GLASS WINDOWS (BOBI)**

**SLOW DOWN YOU'RE HERE**

**PŌTURU IHO KEI KOE.**

**CHALK MAZE/PATHS OUTSIDE (DAN)**

**ANTHROPOSOPHIC/THERAPEUTIC CLAY SCULPTING (BOBI)**

**FLOORPLAN:** Green Room, Stage (1.5 x 6.6), Seating Area (9.3 x 12.5), The Snug (7.5), Foyer, Café, Servery, Theatre Office, Entry.

**JUST-IS  
EXHIBITION/  
EVENT  
JAN 2024**

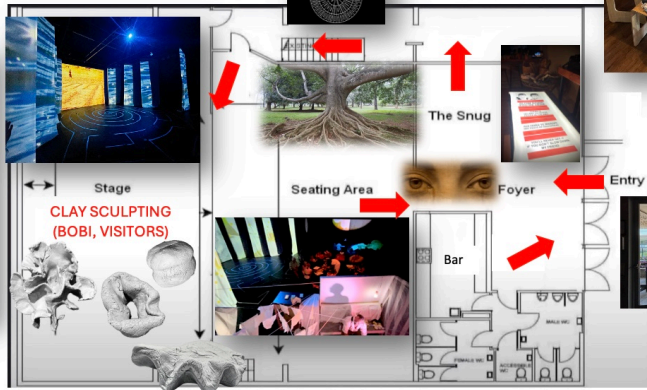


**IMMERSIVE VIDEO INSTALLATION/  
PROJECTIONS  
(BOBI)**

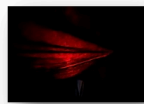


**TECH SUPPORT/LIGHTS  
(JAMIE)**  
  
**ACTORS/LIVE  
PERFORMANCE ART  
(LEA, RENEE, DARLEEN, AVI, VANESSA)**

**PIANO  
(DAN, RENEE)**



**CLAY SCULPTING  
(BOBI, VISITORS)**



**DARK HALLWAY WITH HEARTBEAT AUDIO  
(BOBI)**



**ARCHETYPES:  
PRINTS ON SILKS + AUDIO FILES  
(BOBI, LEA)**



**MINDFUL ACTIVITY  
(VALIA, BOBI)**



**SLOW VIDEOS  
(BOBI)**



**SLOW DOWN  
YOU'RE HERE  
REPLICA SIGN (BOBI, WAIHEKE)**



**IMAGES ON  
GLASS WINDOWS  
(BOBI, LEA)**



**SLOW VIDEOS  
(BOBI)**



**CHALK MAZE OUTSIDE  
WITH KARAKIA, AND IMPROV DANCE  
(DAN, DARLEEN, REBECCA)**



**TASTY SURPRISE FALAFEL IN  
HANDMADE WAIHEKE CLAY BOWLS  
(HADAS, BOBI)**



**CHALK MAZE OUTSIDE  
WITH KARAKIA, AND IMPROV DANCE  
(DAN, DARLEEN, REBECCA)**

## DOCUMENTATION OF THE FINAL EXHIBITION *TEMPORALITY – ZEITLICHKEIT*

After the exegetical reflection on my earlier show *Just-is*, I set my intentions for my final exhibition to follow the premise of 'less is more'! My focus was on a refined, 'sleek' video installation in combination with a gentle offering of sculpting with clay, and one or maximum two live performers, a musician and maybe a dancer. This was to be the elixir of my creative practice-led research with the distilled title *Spaces of Engagement: Tropes of Slow Cinema in a Multisensory Installation Art*. The date was set for 7-10 June 2024, framed by the opening night and the examination, at the Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery at the city campus of the Auckland University of Technology. The following is a post-event reflection:

In preparation, I approached the gallery 'test' space (WM 201c) in a contemplative and analytical manner, hearing the whisperings of the walls and letting them mingle and unite with the stories and reflections in my head and heart. I also measured and sketched. Significantly, I have advanced my projection practice by learning to use video mapping tools in the *Millumin* software.

The large concrete wall facing people as they enter the space, is striking with its grainy, stoney, organic, and haptic quality. To me, it quickly became a core piece reminding me of the sand at the beach and the clay exploring Steiner's temperaments. Looking at it brought up a similar sense of contemplation, questions of belonging, experiences of grief, longing for connection and groundedness, It held the essence of Frankham's suggestion about slow cinema and installation art to "explor[e] the gaps and tensions within the material and myself" (see page ...). To delve into this, I envisioned an ultra-slow moving image. With my 'critical friends and guardians' in mind, such as Benjamin,

Viola, Tarkovsky, Marks, I felt encouraged to use a still image. In a similar epiphanic moment, I decided to share my dwelling on the photograph of the hand print in clay by my twins sister's child with the audience. Again, it was this still point and meeting of inner and outer world which brought my project rolling. It felt digging deep, hitting home, anchoring. To visually merge with the concrete wall as well as explore an artistic cinematic look further, I chose the black and white version. In comparison to the more colorful 'happening' style of my event at the theatre, it felt very suitable in the gallery setting.

In regards of the video compilation, I kept the walking of the maze at the beach a central and enduring piece. I removed the following more dramatic clips, focusing more on contemplation than the whole range of emotions. First, I tried to position the projection across both walls adjacent and opposite of the concrete wall. Give the ratio between width and height, the images got cut and at times stretched too much. I then played around with running two videos at the same time which deemed challenging not to create a too busy atmosphere. It took me a good while to balance what works. With the split and dropped footage, the loop was more than halved, so I chose to include the recordings of Hadas' hands sculpting the clay bowls, and the snails with children fascinated by them, originally shown in the theatre entrance. I loved the resulting combination being able to juxtapose a narrative of my daughter finding her own path versus the calm nurturing (parental) ticking on of sculpting vessels. It is during the final stage of my practice-led creative research that I came up with the title *Temporality*. It is an homage and embodiment of Tarkovsky's 'sculpting with time', a living experience of "time lost or spent or not yet had". In my native language Swiss-German, temporality means *Zeitlichkeit*. This again sounds very similar to 'Zärtlichkeit'

which means tenderness. Twice the film widens across both walls with slowly flying seagulls. I think, the double-screen opens up the spatial, human, and universal perspective and condition. The last clip that I filmed and inserted not only closes the loop of the video but also my MPhil journey. The waves of the ocean wash in and wash out. Just as I connected with them on many initial beach walks, they now complete and repeat, forge and forget ideas in space and time.

To ease the nostalgia and melancholia, I toned down the sepia edit towards a more contemporary look. Another editing device is the overlaying of the cutout clay sculptures which I created in my anthroposophical class, representing joy and lightness. I already played with this subtle symbolism in my test exhibition, careful not to manipulate viewers but maybe trigger them unconsciously as they were invited to express and explore emotions on a tactile level. I wanted to literally foreground my emotional response.

The choice of the musician and the music being played arose intuitively and practically. My husband of 24 years is a pianist and understands my inherent feelings and how to underline my intentions and wonderings with a soundscape that evokes emotions and allows them to float. I am aware that especially melodies and dynamics would influence the viewers' and audience's experiences so as the creative director I asked him to minimalise mood patterns by slowing down and giving space between each key/tone. During the opening night, he was away and I hired a handpan player. The simple, idiophone sound of the steel drum or hang is at the same time freeing and mesmerising. I had to restrict participants and co-creators at the exam so I only invited the improv dancer for the opening night. I think this kept the final exhibition more along

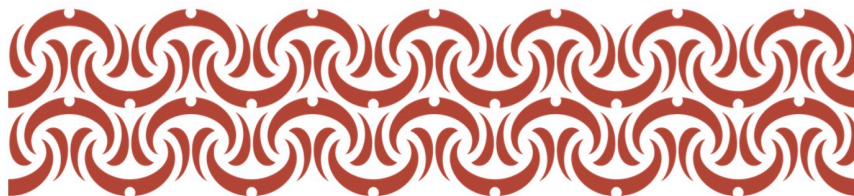
the line of my commitment to 'less is more'. On the other hand, I believe that seeing other people's expressed emotions and actions, and other people witnessing theirs engages the body, mind, heart and spirit more fully. I would yet need [and eventually or possibly would like] to pursue more research around the effects of participatory art as I touched only partly on it in this thesis through highlighting findings by Bishop (2012).

Finally, the shape of the wooden pedestal offering loose natural clay to visitors was derived from of the hand-print on the projected photo, as well as partly inspired by Pipilotta Rist's video installation *Gravity be my friend* (2007). She in turn credits the designer Verner Panton (1970) and his futuristic interior *Visiona II: A phantasy landscape* (Acca, 2011). I only found this out hindsight and was touched as his book blew my mind growing up as the daughter of a Swiss-Danish architect in the Seventies. Was I recreating a memory? I wish I could have asked visitors about their conscious and unconscious creations as clumps of clay turned into various shapes. Some copied the bowl, or dwelled in the contemplative making of it. Others seemed intrigued by the pinching and shaping with fingertips or moulding with the palms of their hands. A snail was born out of clay, too.

The sentence at the end of the video loop cites Auster and Wang's (1995) iconic phrase:

You'll never get it, if you don't slow down, my friend.

TE WAI NGUTU KĀKĀ GALLERY



**Bobi Lauper Tisch (AUT MPhil in Art & Design)**

**Zeitlichkeit - Temporality (2024)**

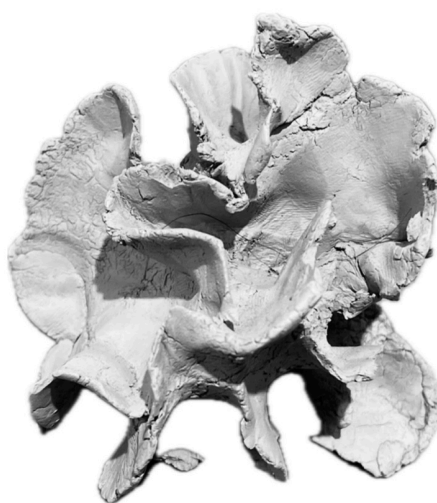
**Three-panel video projection. Multisensory installation.**

**7 - 11 June 2024**



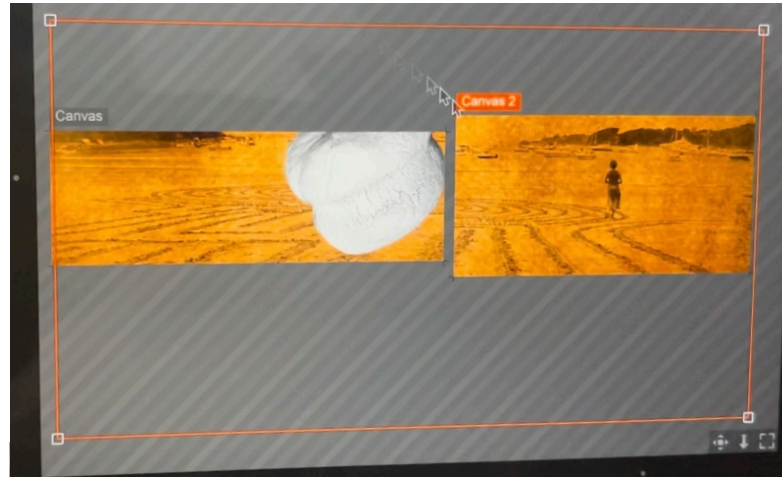
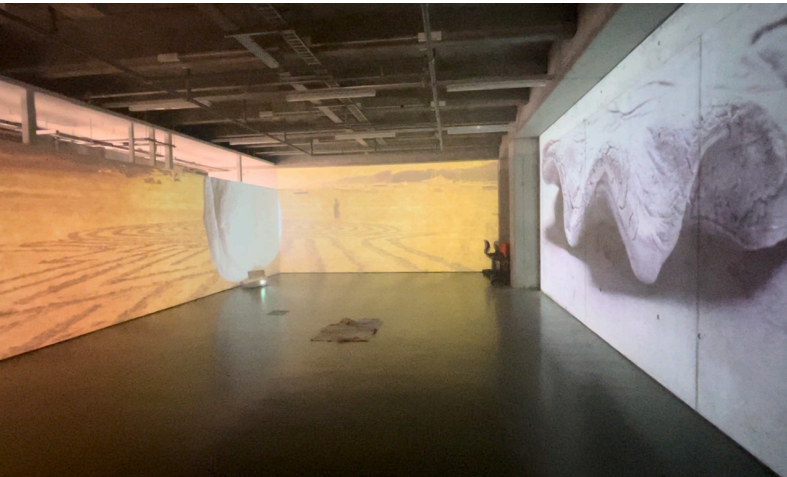
'Zeitlichkeit - Temporality' is a personal and collective living inquiry to interconnect body, mind, and spirit through an interdisciplinary lens. According to Frankham (2019), contemplative art has the potential to create spaces of engagement and self-reflection where viewers are prompted to explore gaps and tensions within the material present and themselves. With form and content strongly combined, the work can be realised as an experience in itself rather than a representation, and activate complex, situated, and subjective truths. You are invited to slow down, shape the moment, reminisce, anticipate, or just-be.

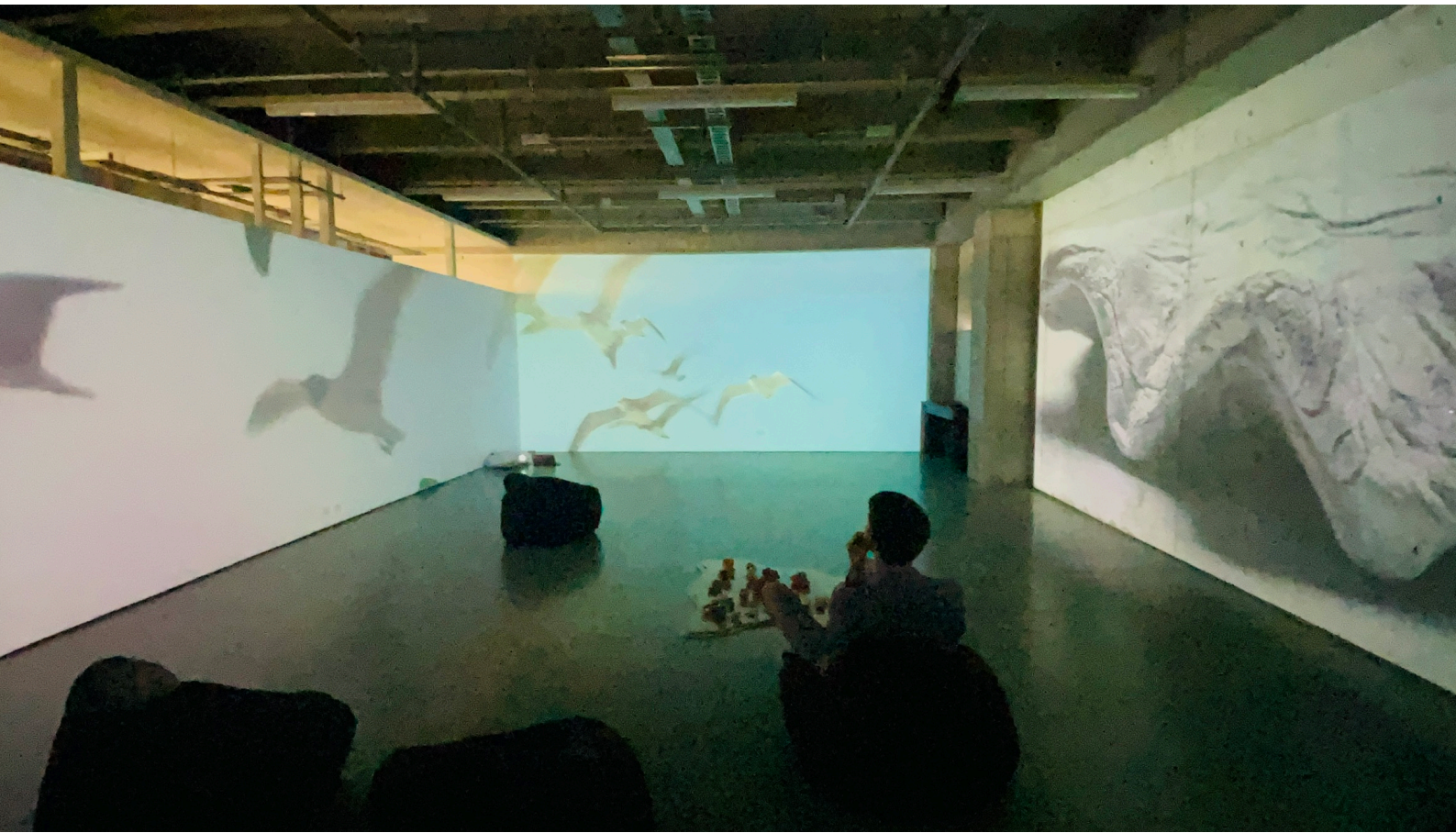
Bobi Lauper Tisch is an artist-researcher-teacher whose moving-image practice explores the interplay between tropes of slow cinema, haptic visuality, and installation art. Drawing on Jarvis' (2020) claim that slow cinema embodies an oppositional rhythm in the era of fast capitalism, the research-creation delves into contemplative processes within the maker and viewers/participants of multisensory installations.

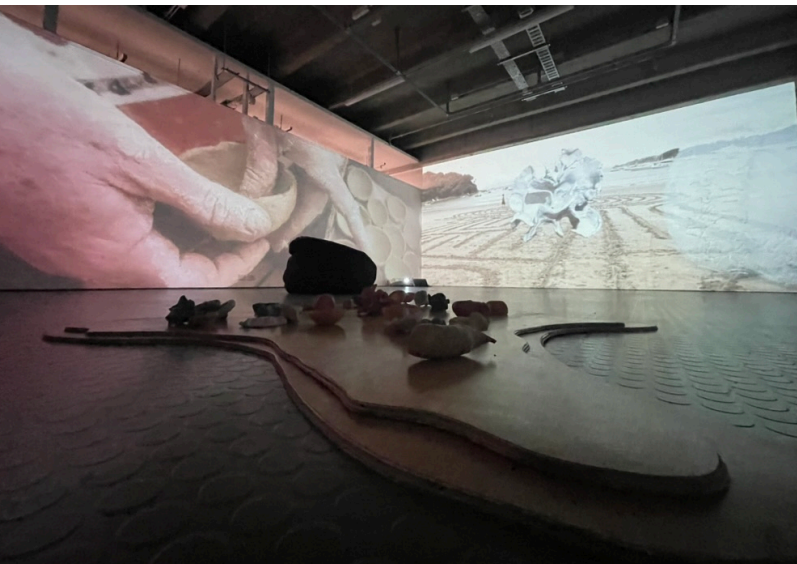
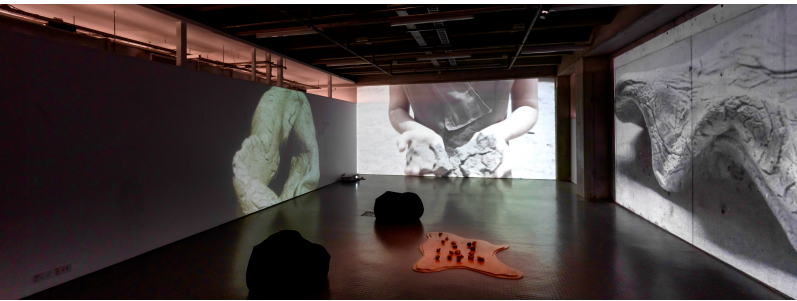


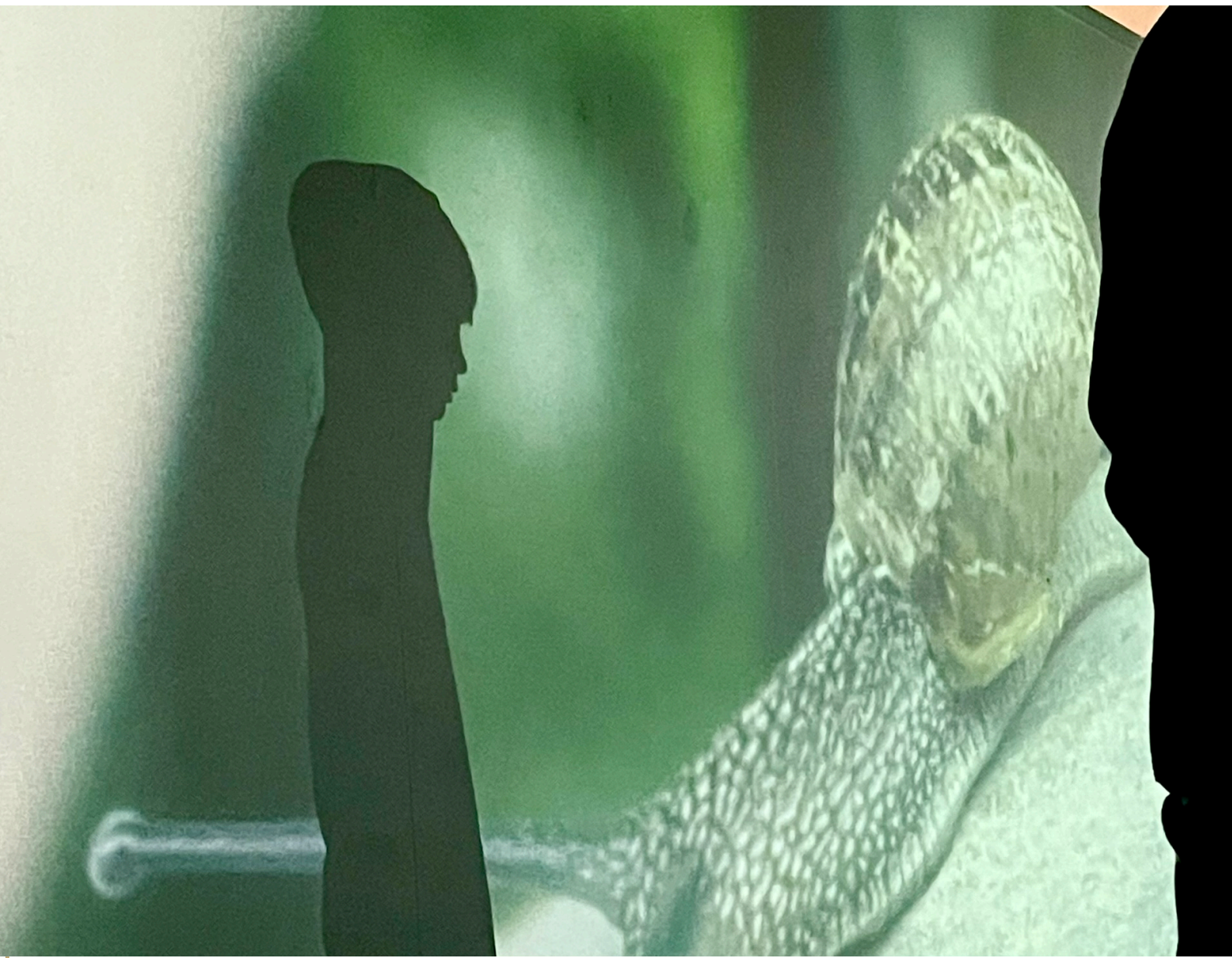














## VIDEO LINKS

### JUST-IS

<https://vimeo.com/1007867345>

<https://vimeo.com/1007869840>

Password: justis2024bobi

### TEMPORALITY – ZEITLICHKEIT

<https://vimeo.com/1007861047>

<https://vimeo.com/1007872507>

Password: aut2024bobi



**C**ONCLUSION

Slow down  
head your  
heart!

CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

This research-creation has investigated how an installation might explore tropes of slow cinema in relation to contemplation and interconnectedness by means of multisensory spaces of collective engagement. In short, I was interested in relating tropes of slow cinema to an expanded mode of video installation art. My focus was on how contemplative processes played out in and engaged with multisensory and participatory elements as I considered visual, auditory, tactile, and gustatory experiences. In addition, I explored spatial design while installing in different dynamic and reflective spaces and how audience-participants and improv actors interacted in those spaces. I have found that the temporal affects around slowness can generate collective forms of co-creation, along with a sense of interconnectedness. I have also explored presence, symbolic imagery and objects, and layers of personal meaning within the imagery.

At times during *JUST-IS* at the Waiheke Arts Centre, I felt like I was trying to connect opposite interests. Navigating slow cinema, installation, and participatory performance is complex and overwhelming; a balancing act between innovative openness and losing profoundness for entertainment. The installation artist Hirschhorn states:

Every old painting makes you more ‘participating’ than today’s ‘participative art’  
because, first of all, real participation is the participation of thinking!  
Participative art is only another word for consumption  
(Bishop, 2012, p.172).

With *TEMPORALITY*, I tried to tilt the balance more towards contemplation again and less focus on participation and interaction. Still, by engaging with installation art, ultimately, not only the viewers but also myself as the maker can be transformed from a critical and reflective observer into an active and creative participant.

Vial & Coëllier (2021), consider installation art as the experience of self, in space and time, suggesting:

Installation art transforms the viewer into a performer  
relying on cognitive and emotional exchanges between three fields:  
the body, the medium, and the collective space  
while the object is decentred, fragmented, and (...) extended to the whole space  
(p.xx).

As elaborated in this thesis, Manning (2014), Kozel (2018), Frankham (2019), Glisovič (2021), and Springgay (2022) all advocated for a poetic approach, regardless which artistic technique, to create pauses and contemplative moments to allow for personal reflection and recognition of shared humanity. Aluli Meyer (2008) and Viola (2011) emboldened me to bring spirit in its many forms into spaces of engagement. May 'conscious(ness) development' continue to help creators navigate in the 'grand installation' of the inseparable realms of body-mind-spirit and past-present-future.



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