PURE POTENTIALITIES: EXPLORING THE TRANSCENDENTAL OR SPIRITUAL MOMENT WITHIN IMMANENT EXPERIENCE

TINAZ JAL KARBHARI

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"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, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements, or where I have previously written it myself under these same conditions and have regurgitated my own genius".

Tinaz Jal Karbhari
8th October, 2013

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ABSTRACT

Pure Potentialities: Exploring the transcendental or spiritual moment within immanent experience

This practice-based art project explores the idea of potential transformation(s) in relation to spirituality, through the theoretical contexts of *affect theory, immanence, smooth space* and *becoming*. Underpinning this exploration is a focus on the potentiality of "new planes of thought" (Deleuze, 1994, p.139), which enables a questioning that invites a transcendental or spiritual moment to manifest within an immanent experience. This project identifies spirituality as akin to affect, with both comprising of abstract and intangible qualities, yet together, they form the binary opposition of transcendence versus immanence. This conflict underpins this project and is explored through installation practice, studio lighting and projection. These exploratory processes are informed by the Zoroastrian religion, within which the element of light plays a crucial part. Working with light in a nonrepresentational manner, the project prioritises personalised encounters and thus the possibility of forming new ways of experiencing spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

"Great thinking, whether it takes the form of art, science or philosophy, does not settle with a fixed system or foundation. We create concepts not in order to label life and tidy up our ideas but to transform life and complicate our ideas" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xix).

Within contemporary everyday life, transformation is inevitable. However, for this process of transformation to occur there needs to be a *change* in form, nature or appearance of the entity in discussion. This act of *change* informs the idea of transformation and this is the foundation upon which the territories of study – *affect theory, immanence, smooth space, becoming* and spirituality – manifest for this research project. It is important to note that apart from spirituality, the terms above have been formulated by philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995)[1] and this is why the project is positioned and explores a Deleuzian way of thinking. This exegesis discusses what each term of thought entails and how they merge as they attempt to create *Pure Potentialities* – reinforcing the title of this project. Further to this, it explores how the overall aims – of creating installational artworks that suggest and invite viewers to have a transcendental or spiritual moment within an immanent experience and how this might construct potential for the *becoming* of spirituality – continue to be investigated through this ongoing research practice and the practice of other installational artists and their artworks. What is emphasised is the openness to *change* a viewer needs to have when encountering the installation – *change* here is referred to as a break or *rupture* of fixed perceptions. This amounts to potential *ruptures* within the binary of transcendence versus immanence.

In theory, spirituality exists within a field of transcendence so for one to have a spiritual moment within an immanent experience, there needs to be an openness to transformation. Only through transformation can the process of *becoming* occur, enabling the stated experience to transpire. This in-depth dialogue is precisely what is discussed throughout this exegesis, in turn offering readers a thorough analysis of the theoretical and contextualising terminology that inform and synthesize this project.

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[1] Deleuze's oeuvre attempts to form a new way of thinking (by being based on transformation and new thought) and it is for this reason he compiled and created an assortment of new terms, as well as borrowing specific terminology from preceding philosophers like that of Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677).

This exegesis is therefore divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, *Aura,* the two main contexts informing the project, spirituality and *affect,* are examined. Accordingly, the chapter explores how these two terms are made up of the same qualities, particularly referring to movement and transformation; yet raise the binary of transcendence versus immanence. Throughout this discussion what is brought to the forefront is the way in which the thinking and ideas pertaining to Zoroastrianism[2] have become abstracted in order to become elements within the installation practice. By doing this, the works that make up this thesis have transformed and enabled an open and ephemeral experience to occur. This chapter additionally refers to installation artist Ho Tzu Nyen, discussing how *The Cloud of Unknowing* (2013) explores the suggested kind of open-ended experience, leading to transformation.

Consequently chapter two of this exegesis, *Light,* extends this dialogue by discussing how light is a vital component to the Zoroastrian religion and as an object – via projection, as well as through reflection, refraction and diffraction from provisional lights – has been used to create immersive installations. Installation artists, Bill Viola and James Turrell are referred to in this capacity. What is reinforced within this chapter is how movement – whether it be through participatory interaction or directly from the artificial/natural light sources – is essential in creating such experiences because it allows for new readings of the projected imagery or light, readings such as *planes of immanence.*

Accordingly, chapter three, *Potential,* widens this analysis by critically unpacking Deleuzian ideas of *immanence, smooth space* and *becoming*, which collectively align the contexts (stated above) of this project with the content (light, movement and transformation)*.* This is additionally discussed in relation to the art influences and practices of Ann Veronica Jannsens and Olafur Eliasson, as well as The Lab Project: *Transforming Topographies* – which was executed by AUT University students and staff as part of the 5th Auckland Triennial, 2013. Further to this, the concepts of *potentiality* and *the new* are compared to *becoming* and this leads back into a dialogue around transformation.

This exegesis therefore acts as a written discussion of the key theoretical positions – spirituality, *affect theory, immanence, smooth space* and *becoming* – that inform this thesis: *Pure Potentialities.* The ideas of movement and transformation sit at the heart of this written exploration, enabling readers to identify and comprehend how they permeate the terms above,

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[2] Zoroastrians are the worshipers of Ahura Mazda and the followers of the great Iranian prophet Spitaman Zarathushtra who lived around 1500 BCE. Zarathushtra was the first prophet to preach a monotheistic religion, and he revealed that there was only one God, Ahura Mazda**.** Zoroastrianism began in Persia, which is today referred to as Iran.

to form the deep critical contexts and perspectives that have emerged to shape this research project.

(Note: Photographs with red borders = experiments/test

Photographs with green borders = more resolved works)

CHAPTER ONE:

AURA

1.1: Spirituality

There are many affiliations that can be made with the term 'spirituality', most of which sit beyond religious frameworks. However, in the context of this practice-based research project, spirituality is abstractly informed by the Zoroastrian religion and its core element, light, which is used as a material within this installation practice.

In present contemporary times, religious practices, beliefs and rituals vary considerably between the primary global traditions[3], thus acquiring a single definition is difficult. The same could be said about the concept of spirituality. According to theorist David Fontana (2003), "Materialist science holds that the material world is all that there is, religion argues by contrast that the material world is simply the manifestation of much deeper, nonmaterial realities" (p. 6). This "belief in a nonmaterial dimension" (p. 8), nevertheless, is the common thread that links these diverse religions together, whilst raising the idea of spirituality. Zoroastrian philosopher, Pervin J. Mistry (1997) reinforces this by stating "the word spirituality is derived from the term 'spirit'. 'Spirit' has no size, form or weight and therefore, it cannot be described physically" (p. 1). She clarifies this further saying that spirituality cannot be taught and – in simple terms – this makes sense, because how can one be expected to teach something that is indefinable? This factor of in-determinability is precisely what fuels this project, allowing for transformation, open-endedness and discovery, otherwise referred to by philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1994, p. 139) as "new planes of thought".

Fundamentally, this project understands spirituality as a type of energy, which lacks an identifiable beginning or end and as a result, exists in the form of an intangible, abstract and verbally inexpressible force. Viewers do not just observe this force but have a bodily experience of it within the installations, as it cannot be read or defined, it can only be sensed. Art theorists Nevill Drury and Anna Voigt (1996) further substantiate this point in the introduction of *Fire and Shadow* when they suggest, "By its very nature, the concept of 'spirituality' is intangible and open to debate" (p. 7). It cannot be defined, nor can it be seen, but it can be experienced and so, through continuous testing, this practice-based art project aims to "...communicate what cannot be expressed in any other way" (Macku, n.d.). This highlights the research questions and overall purpose for this project: to explore, investigate and invite a transcendental or spiritual moment to manifest within an immanent experience, how this is created within an artwork, how this

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[3] Fontana (2003) suggests that the primary global traditions refer to the most recognised religions and these include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Taoism (p. 6).

might construct potential for the *becoming* of spirituality and whether it is possible to even do this.

As an artist who has personal involvement with Zoroastrianism, it is important to state that the Zoroastrian religion is what informs the concept of spirituality within this project. It is also what the initial works in this project were based heavily upon. They primarily consisted of replications of rituals or of the accouterments from specific rituals.

Figure 1. (May 2012). Still from: *Kushti Prayers by Ervad Cyrus Daji.* Installation and performance in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes.

This performance – of a Zoroastrian's daily prayers – took place in an empty room, behind a white screen. The purpose of this was to create a staged atmosphere, which produced a silhouette of the Priest that was praying and emphasise the actions and vocalisation of his prayers.

Figure 2. (May 2012). *The Rawan Jashan Ceremony of Sanaya Vispi Buhariwalla.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 1 hour and 42 minutes.

This replica of a Jashan or communal ceremony was based on the actual commemoration ceremony of Sanaya Vispi Buhariwalla. The room was set up in the same way the genuine ceremony was, just without the Priests present performing the prayers. Instead a voice-over was included, offering viewers the opportunity to have an experience as close to the real thing, as it would otherwise never be experienced seeing as the religion is a birthright.

Figure 3. (June 2012). Still from: *Talk Week.* Installation and performance in Level 1/2 stairwell and Level 2 foyer. Duration: 3 minutes.

This performance was based on the idea of purity – being a key component within the Zoroastrian religion – which involved the cleansing of viewers by throwing rose water onto them as they walked up the stairs, and this was followed by placing some more rosewater into their hands as they walked into the foyer space. After reciting some prayers, I walked into the room – which had an image of the outside of a Zoroastrian fire temple projected on to it – and closed/locked the door behind me, stopping viewers from entering too.
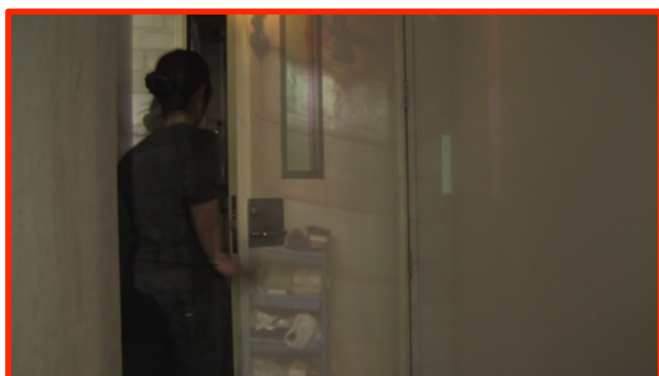

Figure 4. (June 2012). Still from: *Talk Week.* Different viewpoint.

Figure 5. (June 2012). Still from: *Talk Week.* Different viewpoint.

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In these early works, a key critical perspective emerged. By didactically constricting the experience of art through weighted religious content, the initial works, as seen in *Figures 1* to *5,* limited affectual response. Correspondingly, the foundation of this project has since shifted and now focuses on openness, transformation and the ability to "raise as many questions as it affords answers" (Ursprung, 2008, p. 5). With that being said, Zoroastrianism is no longer an identifiable component within the installations, as it is incorporated through abstract means allowing for a kind of conceptual evolution; it is considered the instrument informing the core content (light) of this project. Accordingly, a full explanation of Zoroastrianism, in order to gain further insight sits beyond the scope of this exegesis. Instead it shall be noted that fire and light form the core of Zoroastrianism – Mistry (1997) emphasizes this by stating that, "fire is both spiritual as well as physical. Being spiritual, Fire (Asha Vahishta), is a Divinity; It is equated with Ahura Mazda's [God] Own Inner Light and Life/Energy. As energy, fire transmutes the physical (matter) into the spiritual" (p. 2).

This project now recognises that spirituality and light are made up of energy that is fed by vibrations and oscillations, which suggests the nature of spirituality to be something intangible that morphs through space. Thus, spiritual essence appears in a form that is constantly in the process of producing itself. Installation artist, Ho Tzu Nyen explores this particular territory of transformation within *The Cloud of Unknowing,* 2013.

Figure 6. Nyen, H.T. (May, 2013). Still from: *The Cloud of Unknowing.* From St Paul Street Gallery II, Auckland. Retrieved from http://www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz/talks/5th-auckland-triennial

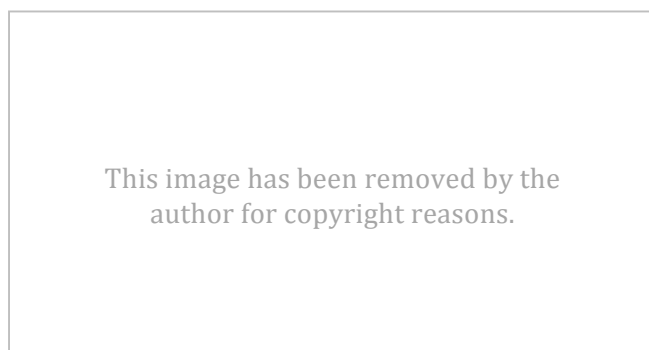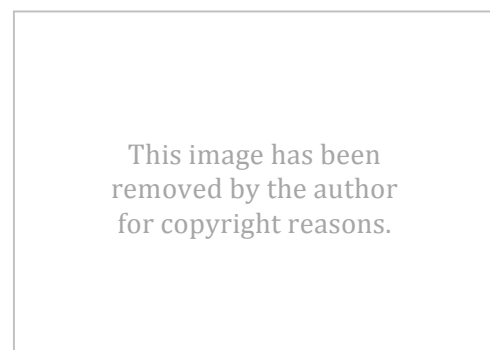*Figure 7*. Nyen, H.T. (May, 2013). Still from: *The Cloud of Unknowing.* From Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland. Retrieved from http://aucklandtriennial.com/artists/

Nyen creates a sensory experience of uncertainty and potential through the use of audio, visual and spatial elements. The installation – which has been exhibited in different contexts

worldwide, but in this instance is referring to the install at St Paul Street Gallery II, Auckland as part of the 5th Auckland Triennial (10th May – 11th August, 2013) – consists of a single channel HD video projection, accompanied by 13-channel sound, smoke machines, floodlights and a show control system, which all combine to transform the gallery into an immersive and interactive environment. "It's a question of how to present videos in a physical space. They've got to do something that the cinema can't. There has to be an extra, experiential dimension" (Lhooq, 2013), states Nyen. What is of particular interest is the way in which the installation "examines clouds as an art historical motif symbolising transience, emptiness or, in the case of Chinese landscape painting, phenomena that elude representation altogether" (Wee, 2011). As an object, clouds act as a useful metaphor when considering Nyen's work. These dense constellations of elements are caught in a continuous state of suspension and alteration, resulting in the escape of resolution or conclusions. The cloud – by the end of the viewing experience – is physically present in the room. "Finally what you think is projected smoke you realize is actually coming from behind the screen. So the cloud is materialized" (Lhooq, 2013). Ultimately, the lighting, smoke and film combine to render a state parallel to a spiritual journey for viewers, being open to limitless readings and experiences, therefore existing in *a form that is constantly in the process of producing itself.* Nyen summarizes this by stating, "I wanted to make a film that's packed dense with so many references that everyone can draw their own visions and hallucinations out of the same source" (Lhooq, 2013).

What has been made evident through Nyen's work is that spirituality and light both have an ephemeral and transformative quality attached to them, due to their very nature. The idea of transformation suggests infinite possibility leading to a potential *becoming* or change, in this case, of spirituality. However, to be able to grasp and extend the notions of transformation and *becoming* in relation to spirituality, the second key context of *affect* needs to be identified, defined and discussed.

1.2: Affect

Life and Art are made up of affects. According to Colebrook (2002), many philosophers have attempted to define affect and have been unsuccessful, because as Deleuze (as cited in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy,* 1988) states, in relation to art, affects are "passages of intensity" that move, change and transform – they are a *bodily experience.* Accordingly, affects here are

theorized as "the body's passage from one state of affection to another" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 41). During this change of state the bundle of affects or *bloc of sensations* can only be experienced through a fracture or *rupture,* breaking the flow of reading or analysis of the artwork. It is because of this *rupture* that the transformation or *becoming* occurs (p.43). According to *The Deleuze Dictionary* (2005) *becoming* is described as "the pure movement evident in changes *between* particular events". However, it is important to mention that rather than it being a "phase between two states" or "a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state" (Parr, p. 26). Relating this back to art, art is made up of affects and these can only be understood through a *bodily experience*, so one cannot read or define them; they can only experience them and thus affect forgoes language. Theorist Eric Shouse (2005) reinforces this by stating, "affect is ... abstract because [it] cannot be fully realized in language and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness (p.1)".

Figure 8. (April 2013). Still from: *Install 8.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop).

This installation involved a moving image being projected onto a grey concrete wall in an empty room.

Figure 9. (April 2013). Still from: *Install 8.* Different viewpoint.　　　　　*Figure 10*. (April 2013). Still from: *Install 8.* Different viewpoint.

There is now a visible connection arising between spirituality and affect within this project. Both concepts share the same characteristics and if spirituality is referred to as a type of energy or force that is in a fluid and transformative state of oscillation, it would be fair to propose that affect is too. As a result, this project aligns spirituality as akin to affect. Through ongoing experiments a number of attempts have been made to produce artworks that deliberately create a rupture enabling an experience of the unknown, leading to unlimited potential. It is what the projection appears not to be which is important; this is what is interesting as it keeps the potentiality component alive. *Figures 8-10* titled *Install 8* achieved this sensibility. In the work, a projection hit a grey concrete wall in an empty room. The source of the projection sat beyond the parameters of the space and as such, appeared non-existent. This created an immediate rupture and awakening of the senses as viewers found themselves searching for something they could not locate within the work. What this also added was the opportunity for viewers to have an uninterrupted experience due to the removal of all distractions, such as the projector, laptop and extension cords within the installation. The precise corner positioning – which involved the projector being installed at a meticulous angle to ensure the imagery met the floor and edge of the concrete pillar – gave the projection an object-like quality and as a result, it acted as a three-dimensional plane within the space. This particular positioning combined with the in and out movement of the projection created an inhaling and exhaling effect; if a wall or corner could breathe this might be what it would look like. The in and out movement was continuous, therefore forming a rhythm, which reinforced the lack of a start or finish point to the moving image component. It was left open to viewers to create an end to the work. By having the projection on the concrete wall, the light was absorbed and so viewers were confronted with this presence in a space that felt potentially real and tangible – it felt like

it belonged in the space because it merged into the wall and became part of the perimeter or architecture of the space. Viewers commented that the projection appeared as if it emerged out of the wall rather than sitting on it. An important consideration with this install was the specificity of locating the moving image accurately within the architecture, by using the tangible as an apparatus to catalyse the intangible. Furthermore, the colour, tone, movement and speed of the moving image are all other factors that created additional ruptures and impact and will be discussed in section *2.1: Light and Imagery.*

CHAPTER TWO:

LIGHT

2.1: Light and Imagery

Light is a natural agent, which stimulates sight and makes everything within the world visible. As stipulated in the previous chapter, "light is a form of energy. This energy [is generated through vibrations and oscillations and] is called electromagnetic energy because it is made up of changing electric and magnetic fields. The electromagnetic spectrum is comprised of both visible and invisible light" (McMillan, 2012). This raises an interesting development for the project as it is informed by the imperceptible concepts of spirituality and affect and since light, as a material, is directly associated with the invisible, a fascinating link is created between content and context. The forthcoming discussion will elaborate on just this, discussing how the study of light – from natural and artificial sources – forms a crucial element within the said research.

Provisional lights, projectors and projections have been used for test installations that focused on creating illusions of three-dimensional planes and volumetric forms that gradually contract, expand or sweep through transitional space. In particular, it is the ephemeral projected imagery, which is responsible for creating this movement and plane. Referring back to *Install 8* – in Chapter 1 – the imagery that was projected was a result of filming the rotation of the lantern as shown in *Figure 9*. During such filming, the lantern was concealed with drafting paper so that the only visible thing remained to be the throw of light from the lantern – as seen in *Figure 10*.

Install 8.

Figure 11. (2013). Lantern from Install 8.

This is the lantern that was used to create the unidentifiable moving image that is projected in Figure 8.

Figure 12. (2013). Drafting paper from Install 8.

This is how the movement of the lantern was filmed. The drafting paper was wrapped around the lantern and the camera filmed the rotation from a distance.

What is trying to be emphasised is that the source (i.e. the lantern), which projects the light that is filmed, is the key to the whole process. The colour and movement of the lantern, together, created the ephemeral, ambiguous and supernatural nature of the imagery. The specific shade of blue was not predictable, whereas, if it was golden or yellow, the affiliation with spirituality would have been too obvious and viewers would not have had to think or intellectually engage in order to comprehend the install, as it may have already been comprehended for them[4]. In addition to this, the imagery did not appear as an overpowering and dominant tone of blue, thus being open to interpretation. As for the movement and speed, these are crucial elements in constructing an inviting experience. Since the imagery attained an ephemeral nature – and the definition of ephemeral means to "last for a brief time…" (The Readers Digest Association, 1988) – this led to constant movement – as suggested in Chapter 1. The projection rotated forward and back and this disturbed the overall narrative, in a positive way, by bringing viewers in and out of time. The steady speed reinforced this, as it suggested being caught in an in-between phase, allowing for contemplation and absorption via continuous negotiation and repositioning. The continuous movement simultaneously referenced a never-ending cycle – allowing for transformation – as well as altering the state in which spirituality exists, raising the major critical contexts at hand. Fundamentally, the concept of motion and its ephemeral nature enabled *Install 8* to never become exhausted of potential and through this, there was an emphasis on the vitality of the projection as it responded to the overall environment in flux. Similarly, this is what video installation artist, Bill Viola explores in his work *Slowly Turning Narrative* (1992).
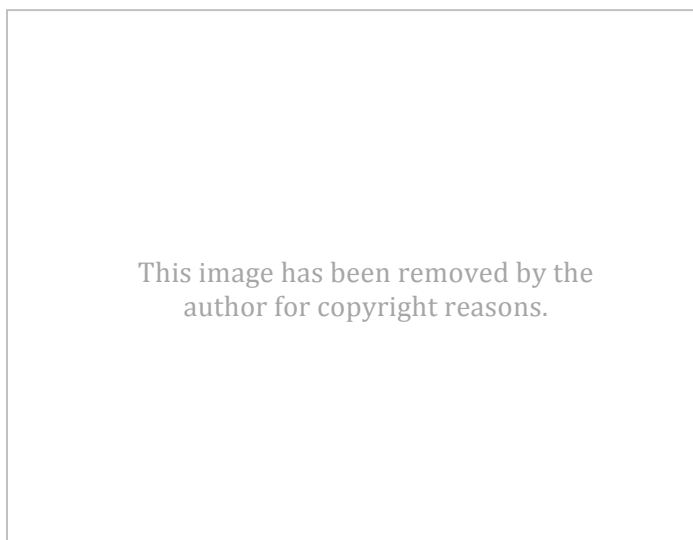

Figure 13. Viola, B. (1992). Still from: *Slowly Turning Narrative.* From Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://collections.lacma.org/node/177735

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[4] According to theorist Emily Gems (n.d.), the colour "blue symbolizes…spirituality". She goes on to state, "artists use it to show perspective. This is a good way to understand the energy of the colour blue – it allows us to look beyond and increase our perspective outward". Thus, this project understands the "beyond" to be suggestive of the spiritual or transcendental.

In the middle of a large, darkened room viewers are confronted with an oversize screen slowly rotating on its vertical axis. The double-sided screen, comprising of one matte side and one mirrored, has two video projectors facing it from opposite sides of the room. One projects a black-and-white moving image of a man's face close-up and the other, a sequence of color scenes characterized by turbulent colour, light and continuous movement. Both moving images have a sound component integrated into them, however what is of particular interest is the relationship developed between the moving images and the screen. Together, they create a rupture, "a gap…between stimulus and response…a break in habit" (O'Sullivan, 2008, p. 92), and these locate the entire space as *an environment in flux*. The ruptures are initially created through the screen's shifting angles – whilst rotating – in relation to the projectors. The moving images narrow, widen, and warp the projected beams, which causes spillage on the surrounding walls. The mirrored side and its transference of distorted and indistinct reflections, on all of the surfaces within the room, further contribute to this sense of a rupture. Subsequent ruptures are created by the images that viewers see of themselves and the room around them, which is reflected through the same mirror, as the screen revolves. There is endless movement, which allows for continuous transformation, leading to discovery and *new thought* on the part of the viewer. In this sense, the entire room and all viewers within it mold together to become a constantly morphing projection screen, due to the seamless and sublimely atmospheric sense of movie/audience permeability. Viola is successful in creating a space where viewers become active participants, rather than passive observers. "You learn something so much more deeply when you move though it – in fact, thinking 'is' a form of movement" (Puhringer, 1994, p. 140). By initiating this movement, he stimulates participants into seeing things from an unfamiliar perspective and as such, *Slowly Turning Narrative,* is fueled with potential and remains open to interpretation. Like Viola, this project uses projection and light to create windows into imagined worlds where there is "freedom from the present plane of existence" (O'Sullivan, 2008, p. 92), ultimately forming an optical field, which serves to expand and contract the spatio-temporal experience.

Relating this back to the explorations of light undertaken within this project, it is clear that steady movement – whether it be via a substrate such as Viola's screen, or within the moving image itself – is deemed necessary for viewers to "…'escape' from fixed habits and impasses of the present through recourse to a 'time' undetermined by that present, a pure past which also, paradoxically, contains the possibility of determining a different future" (O'Sullivan, 2008, p. 93). To be able to *determine a different future*, this project understands that there needs to be a consistency of movement, progression and travelling to enable *Pure Potentialities* and collectively, this raises the concept of the travelling of light.

2.2: Reflection, Refraction and Diffraction

The travelling of light is an idea that was initially explored through the projection of moving images onto suspended and curved planes of drafting paper, in relationship to the internal architecture of the space. Within such installations, the unidentifiable moving images – consisting of singular filmed flames – were in a constant state of flux as they moved from one plane onto the next, suggesting supernatural presence, through their steady movement and colour.

Figure 14. (January 2013). *Install 1.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 2 minutes (without loop).

This installation involved planes of drafting paper being suspended in space, by black thread, within an empty room. The planes could be walked under, through and around and had projected moving images constantly travelling over them.

The travelling of light had also been explored via projection on the walls and planes of the architecture within a space – as seen in *Figures 8-10*.

Figure 8.   Figure 9.   Figure 10.

Other investigations included the subtraction of drafting paper as a substrate to project upon and instead, the addition of reflective substrates such as, clear cellophane, mylar, cover-seal and concrete sealer, as well as photographic studio lighting. By adding in these new devices, the deployment of light – in relation to the way it travels and can be redirected – has been able to be explored in more depth through the new territories of reflection, refraction and diffraction, in turn building potential for different ways of seeing and experiencing.
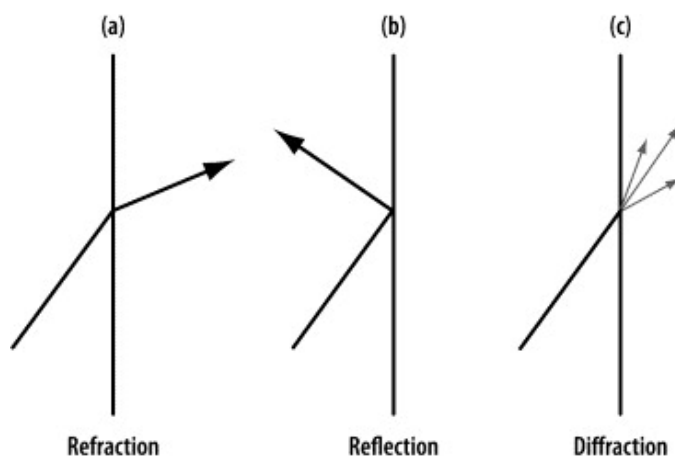

Figure 15. Davison, J,A. & Simpson, M.J. (2006). From Journal of Cataract & Refractive Surgery. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0886335006001520

It seems appropriate to now state that light as an element, is not noticed as much as the particular things it makes visible[5]. What this means – within the framework of this project – is that the qualities of reflection, refraction and diffraction cannot be formed or seen without light. Before taking this discussion further, it is necessary to understand how these words are defined

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[5] I.e.) The ambient light in an empty room is not noticed or observed as distinctly as the architecture within it. It is solely the source allowing for such viewing to occur.

within this project. In its simplest form, this project understands that reflection[6] involves the bouncing of light, refraction[7], the bending of light and diffraction[8], the spreading of light.

Putting this into practice, *Install 15 – parts 1 and 2 (Figures 16 & 17)* show how a sheet of clear cellophane, when suspended in space – by being hung to create a U-shape from the ceiling, or hung from the ceiling and dropping straight down to the ground – reflects and refracts projected moving imagery. What was most intriguing were the reflective products that were spread across the architecture within the room, existing within an ephemeral state. The un-tort and curved properties of the cellophane were responsible for the reflections not having any fixed associations; instead their transient nature allowed for fluid readings. When viewers made their way through the install, their bodies created a draft that caused the cellophane to move. This enabled the reflection to generate a water-like appearance and created a morphing process through space. Through this very process, the refraction of light transpired but only existed momentarily due to the cellophane returning to its still phase, until disturbed by viewers again. Ultimately, within these installations two types of movement existed: the movement of the

Figure 16. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 1.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop).

This part of the installation involved a plane of cellophane being suspended from the ceiling – creating a U-shape. The plane had a projected moving image on it and due to the reflective nature of cellophane, this created reflections and effects around the room.

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[6] According to *The Readers Digest Universal Dictionary* (1988), the term reflection means, "to throw or bend back (heat, light, or sound, for example) from a surface" (p. 1288).
[7] Refraction is described as "the deflection of a propagating wave, as of light or sound, at the boundary between two mediums…" (p. 1289).
[8] Diffraction is the "modification of the intensity distribution of wave phenomena that are incident upon an object or aperture whose size is similar to that of the wavelength, resulting in dispersion and interference patterns" (p. 435).

projected imagery, which leaked onto the encompassing walls, similar to Viola's (1992) installation and the movement of the cellophane. Once again it is clear that movement was crucial in producing an inviting experience, where inviting suggested an openness for potential and ongoing transformation.

Figure 17. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 2.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop).

This part of the installation involved a plane of cellophane being dropped straight from the ceiling and looping slightly as it hit the ground. The plane had a projected moving image on it and due to the reflective nature of cellophane; this too created interesting reflections on the floor and walls of the room.
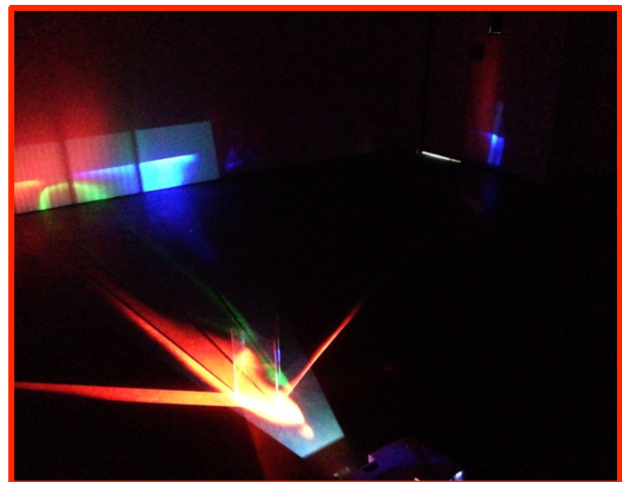

Figure 18. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 3.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 2 minutes (without loop).

This part of the installation involved a triangular prism placed on the ground and projected onto with moving imagery. Due to the reflective nature of mylar – of which the prism was constructed from – interesting reflections, in different angles, were projected around the room.

In *Install 15 – part 3,* a triangular prism was constructed from three pieces of A4 mylar and as the projected imagery, which was directed at the mylar, hit the reflective planes, it diffracted into various angles. The diffracted components were spread across the floor – only in one section of the room – and shared the same unidentifiable nature as deliberated in regards to *Install 15 – parts 1 and 2.* As the imagery was constantly moving, the diffracted light was also endlessly moving, so these movements combined with the ambiguous nature directly aligned to the ideas of spirituality and affect, inevitably leading to transformation. Through consideration, it is evident that the projected light, which attained a fleeting nature, reflected a spiritual being

or presence because both shared an ephemeral quality, and so, *Install 15 – parts 1, 2 and 3*, all attempted to create an unusual or unfamiliar encounter, forming ruptures for moments of revelation. With this in mind, a key discovery through these test-works had been the varied ways in which moving image had appeared within a given installation. The projected image was seen on the wall that it was directed at, on the substrate that sat between the wall and the projector, and through the reflected, refracted and diffracted planes of cellophane and mylar. In this way, the moving image has created a sense of atmosphere which opposes the traditional sense of a projected image – this being flat two-dimensional moving images displayed across a wall. Taking a look at *Figure 19*, the entire floor of the room was covered with cellophane and had a moving image projected onto its surface. What was interesting about this configuration was that the cellophane bounced the image onto the parallel wall, but at the same time – with a slight shift in height of the projector – the wall was then used to bounce the image back onto the cellophane – as seen in *Figure 20*. In this way, there was a double take of reflection and this transformed the whole space into the installation rather than a particular section within the room – which resolved the problem in *Figure 18*. The space was therefore prioritised creating a spatial dynamic, meaning there was constant fluidity attained through visible and invisible movement. Viewers were given the opportunity to interact and walk over the cellophane, as

Figure 19. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 4.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 2.50 minutes (without loop).

This part of the installation involved the whole floor – within an empty room – being covered with cellophane, to reflect the projected moving imagery onto the parallel wall.

Figure 20. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 4.*

This part of the installation involved using the wall to reflect the projected imagery onto the cellophane.

well as through the light. This ongoing experimentation with the ephemeral qualities of light, had enabled a deeper exploration of how light affects viewers' perceptions of architectural space, invariably, opening up a realm of unlimited interpretation and potential. With that being said, a major critical perspective that had arisen is the consideration of light as a physical object, by it holding a similar ground to the substrates of cellophane and mylar, in regards to form. For this reason, there had been an implementation of studio lighting within the installations.

After extensive research, it could be said that the studio lighting was also able to occupy and create presence in space, in a similar way to the projection. Just as the projector – as an object – was a part of the install, the stand and body holding the bulb of the light had become implicated too. In this way, the light became both, an object in its own right and the source that was used to produce the reflective, refractive and diffractive planes. However, with the moving images no longer present the question of how movement is created became the focus. There were two ways that movement happened, where both were dependent on the other.

Figure 21. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 5.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: unlimited.

This part of the installation involved the whole floor – within an empty room – being covered with cellophane, to reflect the studio lights onto the surrounding architecture.

Firstly, upon entrance into the room, in *Install 15 – part 5*, viewers' found themselves walking onto a reflective surface that appeared as if it might be wet. This created an immediate rupture, because the floor appeared to be somewhat different to that anticipated. As viewers made their way through the space, the movement of their feet affected the cellophane, resulting in continuous shifting of the substrate. The light grabbed this movement and bounced off the cellophane reflecting onto the walls, creating additional movement within the reflected planes. Whilst travelling through the space, viewers also walked through the light and this broke the reflection on the surrounding walls, causing secondary movements to occur.

This different type of lighting situation became an interest to this research, thus the removal of the projector in order to allow light to operate as material rather than projection. By being able to identify and understand this, there was a breakthrough for this project's study of light, which was applied to subsequent test installations. From the first encounter of *Install 16 (Figures 23-27)*, the installation was difficult to access because of the borderless nature of the site and the ambiguous positioning/nature of the studio lights. However, after spending time within the piece, the levels of discovery heightened, even though components were still potentially missed when navigating the space. The architecture and cellophane substrates that were attached to it – as seen in *Figures 23 - 27* – were successfully used to reflect, refract and diffract both the natural and artificial (studio and existing site) lighting. In this way, the projected light forms became access points to alternate dimensions, consequently reinforcing the spiritual. [9]

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[9] Installation artist, James Turrell is able to achieve a similar type of experience with his constructions made from light and projection. In particular, his cross corner projection, *Carn, White* 1967 appears as an oblong shaped mass in the corner of a room. However, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that this mass is actually manipulated light, "radiating from an unfathomable depth and suggesting an endless expanse" (Zyman, 1999, p. 18). The oblong appears to protrude out of the corner and as such, becomes an opening into an alternate dimension. Turrell successfully modifies one's perception of the fixed walls due to the finely tuned presentation of the projected light. The sharp, pristine and immaculate edges of the oblong enable it to be convincing, given its odd nature and positioning within the room. "To visualize the unlimited requires a minimum of architecture, that is, the art of joints, of partitions and edges" (Didi-Huberman, 1999, p.47), thus it is clear why Turrell chooses to use corners to create affectual experiences.

This image has been removed by the author for copyright reasons.

Figure 22. Turrell, J. (1967). Still from: *Carn, White.* From Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://www.kaynegriffincorcoran.com/artist/view/1/james-turrell/
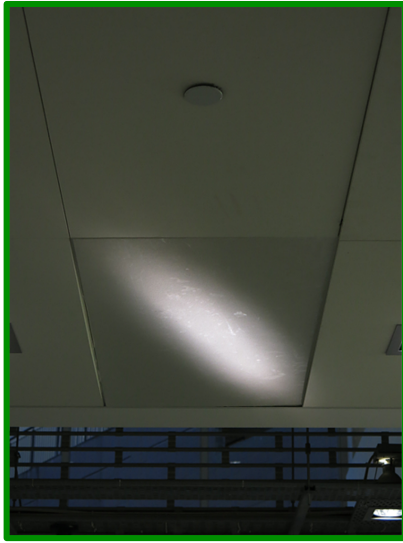
Figure 23. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Installation in Level 1/2 stairwell and Level 2 Foyer. Duration: unlimited.

This part of the installation involved a piece of cover-seal being stuck to a part of the ceiling, whilst having a studio light projecting its light form over it, to create a reflection on the opposing wall.

Figure 24. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install involved a studio light projecting its light form through the glass to create reflections on the opposing walls.

Figure 25. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows how the studio lights were set up within the space.

Figure 26. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install involved half of the grey wall being covered with cover-seal, in order to reflect the natural and ambient light within the space.

This was added to by the three ways in which the travelling of light occurred. Firstly, through the multiple reflections that were made, secondly, via the viewers breaking these reflections as they walked through the install and thirdly, by the time of day, which was constantly changing the amount of light that accessed the space. With that being said, the most interesting outcome from this test installation was the invisible reflections that were created, as demonstrated in *Figure 27*. As previously discussed, when light hits a flat surface it reflects at the same angle that it is projected at and so, the patch of light that was seen on the ceiling was actually reflected onto the bottom left-hand side of the white wall. It could not be seen easily because the colour of the light was off-white and as such, blended into the architecture. It existed, just like spirituality and affect does but it could not be seen, yet again, resurfacing the property of invisibility as a parallel action. By prompting thoughts about the subtle nature involved in revealing and concealing something, attention was brought to the idea of spirituality existing as something that would always remain hidden. The collection of light patches that transmitted, reflected and refracted both the natural and artificial lighting became, in some sense, a sculptural material and a symbol of transitory psychological and physical states. As such, the sheer lightness of light has come to the foreground. Perhaps the combination of this, along with the alternate dimensions that are created, could be perceived in a new way, as *planes of immanence* – which is discussed in the next chapter: *Potential*.

Figure 27. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Different viewpoint.

Like *Figure 22,* this part of the installation involved a piece of cover-seal being stuck to a part of the ceiling, whilst having a studio light projecting its light form over it, to create a reflection on the opposing white wall.

CHAPTER THREE:

POTENTIAL

3.1: Immanence Vs. Transcendence

Immanence emerges out of affect. This is possible because both revolve around the concept of spirituality, which inevitably links to transformation or change. However, an understanding about immanence can only begin to be developed by referring to its binary opposition: transcendence. "Transcendence, or the transcendent, is what we experience as outside of consciousness or experience. We experience the real world as transcendent, as other than us or as external" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxix). Even though Deleuze's philosophical terrain was driven by immanence, Colebrook states that he regarded himself as a transcendental philosopher, because through transcendental philosophy one can ask how transcendence is possible (p.xxix). "…We should not simply accept transcendence or the outside world (reality) as our starting point, that we need to ask how something like a distinction between inside and outside (or subject and object) emerges" (p. xxiv). Colebrook emphasizes Deleuze's claim, declaring, that by questioning this distinction an understanding of "how our experiences of the world as both a real and external world is possible: this is a transcendental approach" (p. xxix). So essentially what Colebrook suggests is that human beings need a transcendental theory to elucidate transcendence, but a transcendental method is not initiated through something, rather such a theory looks at how it is formed. It is for this reason she states that,

> We need to begin from a plane of immanence with no presumed distinction
> between an inside and an outside … the plane of immanence is the starting point
> for a transcendental method that does not accept that life takes the form of some
> already differentiated or transcendent thing (p. 31).

What this means is that human beings have and continue to question the distinction between outside and inside. So, if this questioning is what forms the base of the transcendental theory – a theory which is not initiated through something – and immanence is made up of this exact quality – "it cannot be given some final substantive description" (p. 31) – this would mean that the *plane of immanence* has formed the *plane of transcendence*. Deleuze (2001) reiterates this when he states, "the transcendental field is defined by a plane of immanence" (p. 28). As a result, it is evident why "Deleuze *regarded* [himself] *as a transcendental philosopher*" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxix, emphasis added), and why the context of this research project is based upon transformation and change. This raises additional research questions that are further explored through this project: is human thought via an immanent state of being responsible for creating a transcendental state of being? If so, how does this affect the opportunity of a transcendental moment emerging out of an immanent experience?

Through on-going development it has become evident that this project strives to create *planes of immanence* in order to research such questions. However, before discussing how these questions are investigated it is important to note that the principle of immanence in Deleuze is branched off from his forerunner Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677). Like Deleuze, Spinoza's terms are not simple and definable. His philosophy is composed as a set of interlacing propositions, proofs and axioms, "a style of philosophy that supposedly mirrored a world that is not an object outside us to be judged, but a dynamic plane of forces within which we are located" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xviii, as cited in Deleuze, 1992), otherwise referred to as a *plane of immanence*. For this reason, philosophy for both Spinoza and Deleuze cannot attain a definitive beginning or foundation, for its research territory has already begun and the artist, philosopher or scientist who researches it is also part of the flux or cycle of life. Therefore, any philosophy that intends on confirming the mobility of life must be mobile itself, allowing new routes and various connections to be created. As such, this project is in agreement with Deleuzian immanence being described by philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1999) as, "the 'movement of the infinite' beyond which there is nothing, immanence has neither a fixed point nor a horizon that can orient thought… " (p. 228). Deleuze (2001) reinforces this by stating, "it is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence" (p. 27). Essentially, this project understands that immanence exists in a state of constant movement, allowing for endless progression of thought, because of this lack of a fixed point. So, the reflected, refracted and diffracted planes of light (henceforth referred to as *planes of immanence*), within the test installations, offer viewers' unlimited potential due to their transient nature. "The 'movement has engulfed everything…' " (Agamben, 1999, p. 228), thus, the created *planes of immanence* are constantly shifting and changing and so, they cannot be exclusively identified and defined. This is why movement within the installations *is crucial in producing an inviting experience.*

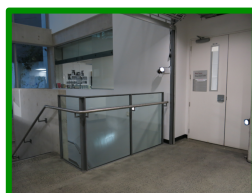Figure 23.   Figure 24.   Figure 25.   Figure 26.   Figure 27.

Returning back to *Install 16* (as seen in *Figures 23-27)*, the travelling of light has been recognized as this movement. When analyzing the role of the natural lighting within this installation, it is clear that this constantly alters due to the time of day. As a result of this shifting, there are fleeting moments, which may only be seen by some, however, by spending time inhabiting the space, all viewers experience a durational sense of becoming conscious of time. Since the concept of time is always in movement and the site of install is affected by daylight, the question then posed is whether the whole installation has the potential to transform into a *plane of immanence*? With this in mind, could both the patch of light hitting the ceiling and the hidden reflection created – as seen in *Figure 27* – also be considered as *planes* through their attainment of the previously discussed qualities? If this were the case, which it likely is, it would be fair to say that one *plane* creates the other, but both exist within another. To further clarify what this means, the patches of light exist as *planes*, the reflections made by these patches produce further *planes* and all of these *planes* sit within the main *plane*, here referred to as the site. This raises an interesting idea about how each *plane* relies on the other due to movement. If one is altered so is the other because the movement applies force to the subject or object at hand. So if at some point *Install 16* is drowned with daylight, the only way to progress from this is for the sun to keep moving on its course throughout the day and because this is inevitable, movement is inescapable. When the sun moves or sets, the space or main *plane of immanence* is altered and so are the additional *planes,* as they become more visible upon darkness outside. Ultimately, the object of light, whether it is from natural or artificial sources, becomes "immanent only to itself" (Agamben, 1999, p. 224). The same can be said about the smoke in Ho Tzu Nyen's installation *The Cloud of Unknowing* (2013) or Bill Viola's screen in *Slowly Turning Narrative* (1992)*. Both components suggest no start or finish point and in some sense this blurs the lines of reality, by moving viewers in and out of mesmerized states. Furthermore, the two installations also have *planes* within a main *plane* because the sites of install remain open to change and *becoming*, through the movement of viewers and materials, such as, smoke and rotating screens. Fundamentally, by thinking about it from a new angle, this project has discovered that a *plane* within a *plane* exists within the territory of *smooth space* and as such, the tone for the following section of this chapter is determined.

3.2: Nomadology and Smooth Space

According to Colebrook (2002), "Deleuze argues that art creates affects and percepts and are not located in a point of view" (p. xx) and this directly links to his idea of *nomadology* or

nomad thought. Colebrook suggests "the aim of nomadology is to free thought from a fixed point of view or position of judgment. Nomadology allows thought to wander, to move beyond any recognized ground or home, to create new territories" (p. xxvii). This description allows for one to identify the theoretical connection to *immanence, affect* and spirituality, as all four share the same transformative qualities of being abstract, invisible and intangible and thus inform one another. To continue with *nomadology*, in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004), Brian Massumi states that "nomad space is 'smooth', or open-ended…*A Thousand Plateaus* is an effort to construct a smooth space of thought" (p. xiii). Similarly, *The Deleuze Dictionary* (2005) expresses it as a space "occupied by intensities, forces and tactile qualities, with no fixed reference point" (p. 258). However, like *immanence, smooth space* is not complete without its' binary opposition: *striated space*. Where nomad space is *smooth space*, "state space[10] is striated or gridded space. Movement in it is confined by gravity to a horizontal plane, and limited by the order of that plane to preset paths between fixed, identifiable points" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. xiii). What this means is that *striated space* is grounded and thus opposes the transformative critical context of this project. In saying that, Deleuze and Guattari (henceforth referred to as D&G for convenience) suggest "…the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, traversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to smooth space" (D&G, 2004, p. 474). This raises a critical perspective that the project continues to consider. If *smooth space* is constantly being transformed into *striated space* and *striated* into *smooth*, should this project then not set out to create *striated space* – where the fixed becomes unfixed? Taking this a step further, if *smooth* transforms to *striated* can that *striated* be transformed back to *smooth* and then back to *striated,* eventually creating an endless cycle of transformation? The objective remains to investigate how an artwork is capable of achieving this kind of transformation to create a spiritual moment within an immanent experience.

Ann Veronica Jannsens' installation *Mists of Immediacy*, explores this territory of transformation. With the use of light, mist and an enclosed space she provokes an affectual response. Viewers are invited to immerse themselves into a vacuum like space and as a result, enter into a state of self-reflection due to the denial of anything else present to reflect on. Artist and writer Mieke Bal comments on her experience saying:

> I found myself totally immersed in a piece … I was standing in nothingness. Blissful, bright and totally opaque was the space that surrounded me, and that dimmed all sound … Where was I? In a strong literal sense, nowhere. I saw

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[10] State space is directed towards a fixed point, result or destination.

nothing, with my eyes wide open … the dense, impenetrable mist packed into the space whose limits I could not even guess was so bright it seemed made out of kitsch fantasies of heaven. The change in the space consisted of a gradual, partial receding of the absolute opacity of the white that surrounded me and that stuck to my skin, challenging my sense of my own boundaries ... I became aware of my own dissolution… (Coultar-Smith, 2006, "Mists of Immediacy: Ann Veronica Janssens", para. 1).

Figure 28. Janssens, A.V. (1999). *Mists of Immediacy.* Retrieved from http://www.installationart.net/Chapter2Immersion/immersion03.html #mistsofimmediacy

Figure 29. Janssens, A.V. (1999). *Mists of Immediacy.* Retrieved from http://www.installationart.net/Chapter2Immersion /immersion03.html#mistsofimmediacy

By using mist, a reading of *smooth space* can be initiated. This is possible because the qualities this material holds is "infinite, open and unlimited in every direction" (D&G, 2004, pp. 475-476). Therefore, one can claim that *smooth space* can manifest itself within individual objects or materials as well as exist within art environments or installations. *Mists of Immediacy* (1999) initially presents itself with no boundaries. However, after viewers adjust to the atmosphere in which they are immersed, they try to identify the walls that appear to be out of hands-reach. This is done in order to regain control over the situation and this precise negotiation can be understood as *smooth* transforming into *striated*. Once viewers reach this *striated space*, which attains "measureable visual qualities" (p. 479), they have the opportunity to return to *smooth space* by simply letting go off the wall in front of them and walking off in an alternate direction. This yet again places viewers within an atmosphere that seems to have no edges until one attempts to find them. In this way Janssens' installation successfully explores the endless transformation between *smooth* and *striated*. Thinking about it from a different approach, the mist could also be interpreted as a *plane of immanence*, which exists within a larger *plane* – this

being the enclosed box-like space. As a whole, both these planes sit within another room and perhaps this room can be considered the *smooth space.* By suggesting this, viewers experience the transformation between striated and smooth in a second way, as they walk into the *striated* room, followed by walking into the *smooth* enclosed box. They then walk out of the box into the room, thus moving from *smooth* to *striated* once more – and this is precisely how the discovery of *planes of immanence* existing within *smooth space* comes about. Like *Mists of Immediacy,* this project attempts to create installations that offer viewers the potential for endless transformation, leading to *becoming.*

3.3: Becoming

As previously identified, *becoming* exists as *the dynamism of change…tending towards no particular goal or end state* (Parr, p. 26, emphasis added). It is understood as pure movement; however, philosopher Todd May (2003) suggests "the movement of becoming…is not a movement from a transcendental reality to its realization (one that is merely possible in terms of our own reality), but a movement from the virtual to its actualization" (p. 148). In basic terms, this means rather than *becoming* being the movement from a transcendental realm to reality, it exists as the movement between immanent sources – thus, *becoming* does not exist as a fixed or actual thing because it is constructed as a constantly transforming process. So collectively, through thought processing and engagement within an installation, viewers are able to experience the *becoming* of something – in this case, of spirituality – and this *becoming* remains open, by continually offering and proposing new ways to think about the subject at hand. In this sense, *becoming* could be considered as "the new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remain[ing] forever new…" (O'Sullivan & Zepke, 2008, p. 1). However, "the new does not arrive from some 'other place' (transcendence), but is produced from the very matter of the world…[it is] a repetition, but with difference" (p. 91). So this would mean that the new involves playing with the immanent, or that which is already present, thus reinforcing *becoming as the movement between immanent sources.* Through this recombination of matter, moments of non-sense – otherwise referred to as the *gap or rupture between stimulus and response* (O'Sullivan, 2008, p.92, emphasis added) – occur, and these moments connect viewers "with the virtual, with 'our' outside" (p. 98), allowing for a creative response. This act could be further understood as a slowing down of *pure movement* in which the intensity of thought still occurs; thought that produces something different, enabling the encounter and engagement to be different. With that being said, "contact with a realm of potentiality" (p. 100) can be made.

Referring back to philosopher Giorgio Agamben, "…a potentiality is a possibility that exists…potentialities and capacities present themselves above all as things that exist but that, at the same time, do not exist as actual things; they are present, yet they do not appear in the form of present things (1999, p. 14). This thinking clearly links to May's – where he refers to the movement of *becoming* – because this is what is insinuated as the movement from virtual to actual. *Becoming* does not appear visible in actual objects since its immanent form survives in an unfixed and transformative state. Yet, it has the possibility to be experienced through the movement of these objects, as potential insists on what "can both be and not be" (p. 182). Colebrook reinforces this by saying, "what we do not have is some idea or end as to what that potentiality might create" (2008, p. 108), and so, it remains in a constant state of flux, encouraging discovery through *difference.* So with all this in mind, what has been realised is that *becoming* is suggestive of the new through *difference,* the new is evocative of potentiality and potentiality advocates transformation[11]. Therefore, *becoming* could also be referred to as potential and correspondingly, this potential exists within the previously discussed contexts of spirituality, *affect, planes of immanence* and *smooth space,* as each – within this project – attempt to undergo a *becoming,* a *pure movement* that remains open-ended. In this way, it is clear as to why the test installations for this project have and continue to be driven by the idea of transformation.

The Lab project: *Transforming Topographies* (2013) was an installational-site that thrived off transformation, as suggested by the title. It was a part of the 5th Auckland Triennial at Auckland Art Gallery and was envisaged as a space of negotiation, discussion and mergence, which was continuously positioned, dismantled and repositioned, enabling a fluid and open state of oscillation. It consisted of 21 days with a total of 32 groups, that addressed the Triennial's theme: *If you were to live here…[12],* where the idea of 'here' is considered "an ever-moving and evolving concept [because] to 'live here' does not mean to dwell here, but to play a role in the reinvention of an ever-changing 'here' " (Auckland Triennial, 2013).

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[11] To add to this, what is of significance is how each theory links to and relies on the next – just like Deleuze's oeuvre and terminology – that each has potential and when combined, this potential becomes infinite.

[12] "The title of the 5th Auckland Triennial, *If you were to live here…* is a trigger or starting point which aims to provoke and promote discussion about how contemporary art influences urban transformation and creates active, powerful, accidental opportunities for interaction between artists, visitors and Aucklanders" (Auckland Triennial, 2013)

Figure 30. (July 2013). *The Lab, Transforming Topographies: Day 1.* Installation in 5th Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery. Duration: 21 days.

This installation involved 32 groups – consisting of AUT University students – who collaboratively installed their group projects in The Lab space. Each project addressed the ideas of growth and transformation, allowing for unlimited potential and change.

Figure 31. (July 2013). *The Lab, Transforming Topographies: Day 18.*

Figures 30 and *31* show how the site became "an ever-changing here" (Auckland Art Gallery); where there was constant evolution, by groups performing activities/bringing objects into the space. These activities/objects were altered in form and positioning and then migrated across

the space or removed. An example was the project *We of Soft Edges[13]*, which was set up on Day 1 and left the gallery on Day 7. Within this time, twelve fish bins of mud from different areas from around Auckland City were collected, displayed and 'open' to be stepped in by the public. What was interesting was the way in which the mud transformed – not just by being stepped in, but also by being in the gallery environment. The mud in some fish bins became very hard over the one-week period, so when participants stepped in them their feet would remain on the surface rather than sinking in. In this way, there was a transformation and in some sense a *becoming* of the mud, as it underwent a *pure movement*, whereby there was a *new* or *different* experience of the existing.

Figure 32. (July 2013). *We of Soft Edges, Transforming Topographies: Day 1, The Lab.* Installation in the 5th Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery. Duration: 21 days.

This installation involved 12 buckets with mud that was collected from different parts of Auckland. Participants were invited to step into the buckets.

Figure 33. (July 2013). *We of Soft Edges, Transforming Topographies: Day 1, The Lab.* Different viewpoint.

With this in mind, what has been discovered is the way in which transformation exists on a spectrum. By understanding and accepting this, this research project has been able to identify how a test installation, such as *Install 18,* was too subtle, thus blocking affectual response. Within this transitory site, four spotlights with a tonal variation of white were installed with the intention of being recognised as odd additions to the space. However, because of the incredibly

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[13] This project was proposed and executed by Hannah Hopewell, who is a Spatial Design student at AUT University. She considered mud to be Auckland's common mediator and was interested in its in-between state of poise.

subtle nature of the projected lights, viewers struggled to find the work, especially those that were unfamiliar and not everyday users of the site. They were unable to decipher what was originally part of the space and what had been added and therefore, the planes of light were missed. In a sense, this was intriguing – as spirituality is invisible – however, at the same time this blocked any affectual response that viewers may have had, because there was nothing to ignite or trigger the experience. Similarly, the initial works (May/June 2012) also prevented an affectual response but for a different reason, this being due to their didactic nature. What was discovered was that by forcing and controlling the experience, the level of engagement by viewers was minimal. Ultimately, this project has been able to establish both ends of the *transformation spectrum* and as a result, there is a continued investigation and search for a middle ground.
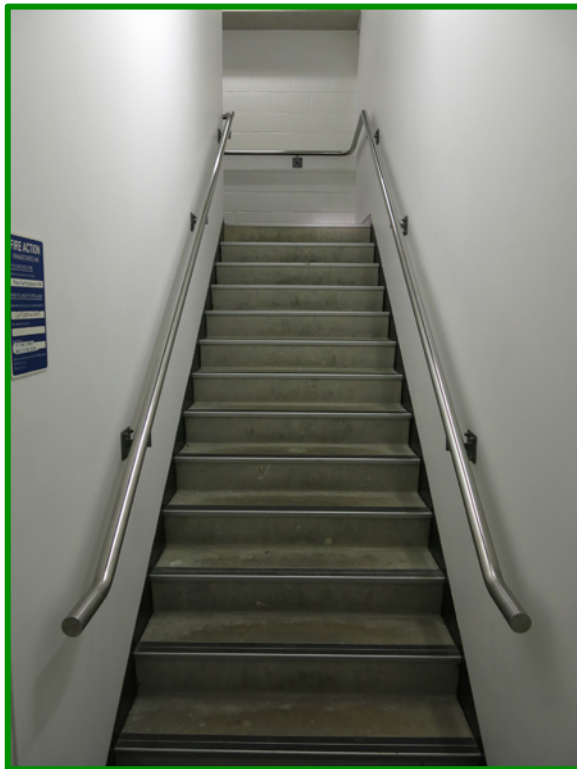

Figure 34. (July 2013). *Install 18: Talk Week*. Installation in Level 1/2 fire exit stairwell (contained). Duration: unlimited.

This part of the install shows how a spotlight was set up to reflect from the bottom right corner off a white brick wall – that was coated in a high gloss resin – and was taken from the first floor looking up.

Figure 35. (July 2013). *Install 18: Talk Week*. Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows the same brick wall but from the second floor looking down. Another spotlight was set up to reflect out from the top left corner.

Returning back to *Transforming Topographies*, another way in which transformation was explored was via the multiple entry points into the site (a total of four, one at each corner); there was never a set path to follow. With that being said, the overall site did have a physical boundary – these being the four walls of *The Lab* space – but due to the nature of the *Transforming Topographies* project, an openness was retained. In addition, the various interventions that occurred within the space had a level of interaction integrated within them inviting viewers to walk in and be a part of the installation from the outset. As a result, their bodies intersected and modified the transitory forms, like that of *We of Soft Edges*. In this way, the whole site was considered a dynamically moving, ever-flowing and hypothetically unified manifestation of life force(s) and for this very reason, *Transforming Topographies* clearly emphasised how the idea of transformation is essential to the process of *becoming.*

Like *Transforming Topographies,* this installation practice has and continues to be heavily influenced by the selected sites having, as part of their character a transitional nature. Within the parameters of this project, transitional sites are referred to as spaces that people can walk through, such as a room in *Install 8* or *Install 15* (refer to Chapters 1 and 2) or in more developed works, spaces which are used every day to get from one place to another, and as such are occupied at various times for brief moments, as people make their way through them. Sites like stairwells, foyers or landings provide good examples (as seen in *Install 16*, in Chapter 2 and *Install 18*).
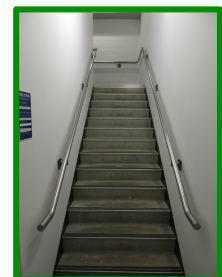

Install 8.   Install 15.   Install 16.   Install 18.

These transitory sites offer a literal passaging that is used to open up sensations that create a spiritual or metaphorical passaging (as seen in *Install 18*). Further to this, the terms transitional and transformational are both dependent on *pure movement,* and so, they insinuate *becoming.* The continual shift in relation to time, perspective, movement and presence enables a

relationship between these two terms to develop. Installation artist, Olafur Eliasson, is successful in portraying such a relationship within *Your Rainbow Panorama* (2006-2011).

Figure 36. Eliasson, O. (2006-2011). *Your Rainbow Panorama.* From ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark. Retrieved from http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/your_rainbow_panorama_4.html

Figure 37. Eliasson, O. (2006-2011). *Your Rainbow Panorama.* From ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark. Retrieved from http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/your_rainbow_panorama_17.html

The 360 degrees, 150metre long and 3metre wide circular walkway is made up of all the colours of the spectrum and is a permanent work that is installed on the roof of the ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Denmark. Its' suspension between the sky and the city creates a viewing stand that insists on "sensory immediacy and on physical engagement"(Coultar-Smith, 2006, p. 2). Eliasson specifically constructed this installation with the intention of making it transitional and by doing so he enabled viewers to become a part of the work by walking through it. In this way, the whole experience is one of constant change. Like *Install 16*, *Your Rainbow Panorama* is influenced by natural light and so, as viewers make their way through the walkway, the colours of the spectrum are continuously changing in terms of tone, due to their positioning and the intensity of daylight. The installation can also be experienced from different areas within the city and understandably these experiences change yet again, according to viewers' location and the light of day. As night falls, artificial spotlights light up the circular walkway and so the experience continues to exist within a changing state. From this description, it's evident that the *pure movement* initiated and encountered by viewers invites an opportunity for *becoming*. Ultimately, like Eliasson's installation, the installations within this research project are never exhausted of potential because of the transitional nature of the sites, which specifically refer to their ephemeral states; thus, the result is always one involving transformation.

This said, two critical aspects have been further discovered through the testing conducted in various transitional sites. Firstly, the site or passage needs to lead to another space – a space that is commonly accessed by walking through the given passage. Secondly, the site

needs to have little or no distractions, some of which include, no permeating sound, no plumbing/pipes and no air vents. These two critical aspects were brought to light via *Install 19,* which involved the installation of four spotlights (with the same white tonal variation as that in *Install 18*) within a fire-exit passage way.
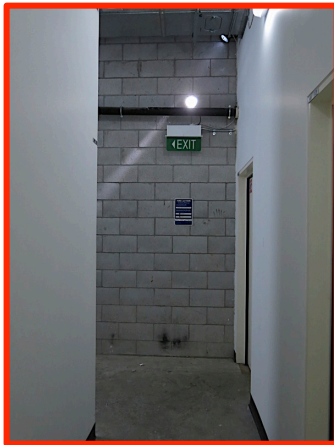

Figure 38. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Installation in Level 1 fire exit stairwell (contained). Duration: unlimited.

This part of the install shows the entrance into the passage way and how two of the four spotlights were installed.

Figure 39. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows the exit door and how another one of the spot lights were installed, spanning across the left hand wall and pooling on the staircase.
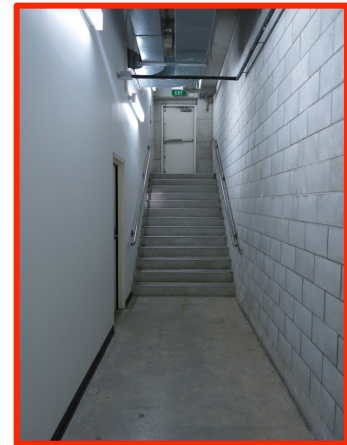
Being a fire-exit, the destination past the escape door would never be reached unless in the event of a fire, so even though the install was within a transitory site, the passage or site was suggestive of being a dead-end; in turn, contradicting the concept of transformation. To add to this, the site was loaded with several distractions, including, the visible air vents and plumbing, as well as the buzzing sound from the pipes and wires above. The result of these distractions meant that viewers were unable to focus solely on the work, as they were not given ample opportunity for an uninterrupted and engaging experience. Furthermore, due to the number of distractions and their slightly overwhelming nature, what was not seen as a distraction in previous installs had now been added to the list: the black cased lighting. The bodies of the lights became as much of a distraction as the air vents or buzzing sound and so, future development would need to involve the light sources remaining hidden (similar to the projector being hidden in *Install 8*).

When looking at the products of light the four spotlights created in *Install 19*, it is evident that a new avenue was researched. What this means is that instead of just projecting patches of light on the surrounding architecture, lines of light were explored. *Figures 40* and *41* show how one corner within the passage was lit by a line of light. What was successful about this particular section was the way in which it acted as more than just a visual element. The

small triangular pooling of light – which appeared where the ground met the corner of the wall and pillar – seemed as if it was otherworldly and so, this section of the install provided the opportunity for an experience whereby viewers could be mentally transported, for even a brief moment, to a place beyond the passageway. This line of light running down the corner of the cement wall and pillar was subtle in nature, yet hard to miss because of its eccentric quality. As such, even though the passageway posed several distractions – by illuminating the corners and crevices within it – viewers would slowly cease to engage with the body of the light (i.e. the actual light sources) and the other distractions and start considering this *other* place. By walking through the passageway and coming across this unexpected yet intriguing presence of light, viewers would spend time processing what was in front of them and subconsciously enter into an encounter, an experience of transformation, which ultimately provides an opportunity for a *becoming* of spirituality. Therefore, it is understandable why the lines of light within this installation were considered – by viewers – as *planes of immanence* and finally, why the passageway was suggestive of being a *smooth space* that was full of potential.

Figure 40. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows one of the spotlights lighting the corner of a cement wall and pillar.

Figure 41. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Different viewpoint from *Figure 40.*

CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

"What matters for life, and for thought, is an encounter with imperceptible forces in sensations, affections, and conceptions, that that these forces truly generate the mind, challenging the coordination of the faculties by rending the self from its habits" (Ramey, 2012, p. 2).

Through an installational-based practice, this research project has and continues to explore the ways in which a transcendental or spiritual moment may exist within immanent experience. This project recognises an oscillating language between the study of light – as an object – and transitional site, as these two formal elements are what construct the basis of this investigation. What has been discovered through this enquiry is how light exists as a field of potential and as a result, has the power – when installed in an appropriate way and site – to create an inviting and engaging experience.

Install 20 is a more recent example of how light was manipulated to create such an experience. This installation was part of the group show, *Same STORY different COLOUR*, which was exhibited at St Paul Street Gallery III from the 4th – 7th September, 2013.

Figure 42. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Installation in St Paul Street Gallery III (passageway). Duration: unlimited.

This part of the install shows how an alcove was coated with a shiny glaze and lit up to create a glowing effect.

Figure 43. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows how part of a wall was coated with a shiny glaze to reflect the projected patch of light.
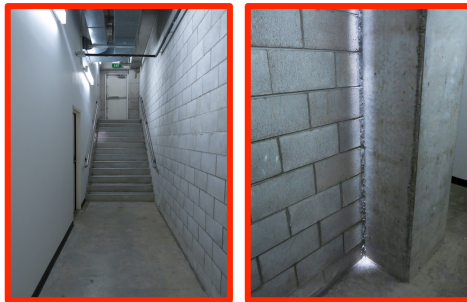
Figure 44. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Different viewpoint.

This part of the install shows the passage and how the lights were comparatively positioned.

Figure 45. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Different viewpoint.

Install 19.

What had been applied to this install were dual lighting effects – that were initially tested in *Install 19* – that created both patches and lines of light within the transitional passage. This site had multiple entry points, which led to spaces that are commonly accessed. What this offered was different ways of experiencing each lighting device, as the effect from each device would inevitably change depending on the positioning of viewers. Apart from the plumbing pipes, there were no distractions as they were painted white to blend in with the walls – and the output from the lights were strong enough to hold the attention of viewers. In addition to this, both walls were white in colour helping to maintain neutrality, allowing the light effects to be the focal point. This was further aided with the hiding of the light sources (black casing of the lights), so it appeared as if the alcove and the wall were lit by invisible sources, enabling thoughts pertaining to the *beyond,* the *other* and the spiritual to surface. Moreover, by adding a transparent layer of gloss to the wall and alcove, reflections were made and existed within the passage, but like *Install 16,* most of these reflections remained hidden. So, the passage not only existed as a *smooth space* but there were invisible *planes of immanence* within visible *planes.* The alcove had such an intense glow to it – due to the lighting and gloss combination – that it attained the same otherworldly qualities that the triangular pooling of light had in *Install 19* (Figure 40). Finally, the site was in a state of constant transformation

Install 16.

due to the changing ambient daylight affecting the space. As a result, viewers were invited to negotiate their experience(s) of the work, as each encounter would be different from the next. Essentially, *Install 20* was successful in nature – and a development towards the final Masters Exhibition could involve a further intensifying of the light sources, as to create and install shafts of lighting that flood into the space revealing an ethereal quality. The install should encapsulate a moment or more of transformation, allowing viewers to feel and experience that flow of energy and potential from the light(s). Viewers should be given an opportunity to enter into and be within the light – whether it be physically or mentally – and by doing so, they accept the extended invitation to experience spirituality in new ways; to experience the *becoming* of spirituality.

In conclusion, this document has discussed how transformation is inbuilt and operates within spirituality and the Deleuzian paradigms of *affect theory, immanence, smooth space* and *becoming*, which together convergently contract and divergently expand. By underpinning and discussing the critical perspectives – through explorations of light and transitional site – that have and continue to arise from these contexts, the questions and aims of this research project remain in sight, in turn highlighting the purpose and value of the study. This project insists upon breaking boundaries, constant change, being limitless, all of which amount to *Pure Potentialities.* Thus it is only appropriate to conclude by quoting Deleuze (2006) himself: "Our world consists of moments of becoming, the mingling of bodies, the meeting of forces, a constant interpenetration and interconnection of all phenomena. There is no beginning or end to this process" (O'Sullivan, p.56), there is simply endless transformation.

APPENDIX: FINAL MASTERS EXHIBITION

Figure 46. (October 2013). *Install 22: Part 1.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III (passageway). Duration: unlimited.

Part 1 shows how an alcove was coated with a shiny glaze and lit up to create a reflective and glowing effect. However, the bottom of the alcove was kept matte as seen in *Figure 49*.

The windows sitting parallel to the alcove that let daylight into the space were blacked out, emphasizing and intensifying the radiating light from the alcove. As a result, the time of day or weather outside did not have an affect on the work.

The source/black bodies of the spotlights were covered with white panels to minimise distraction, although viewers could see the lights when looking directly up into the alcove, as seen in *Figure 48*.
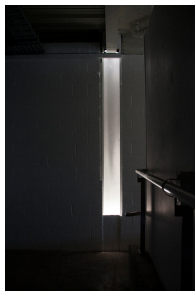

Figure 47.
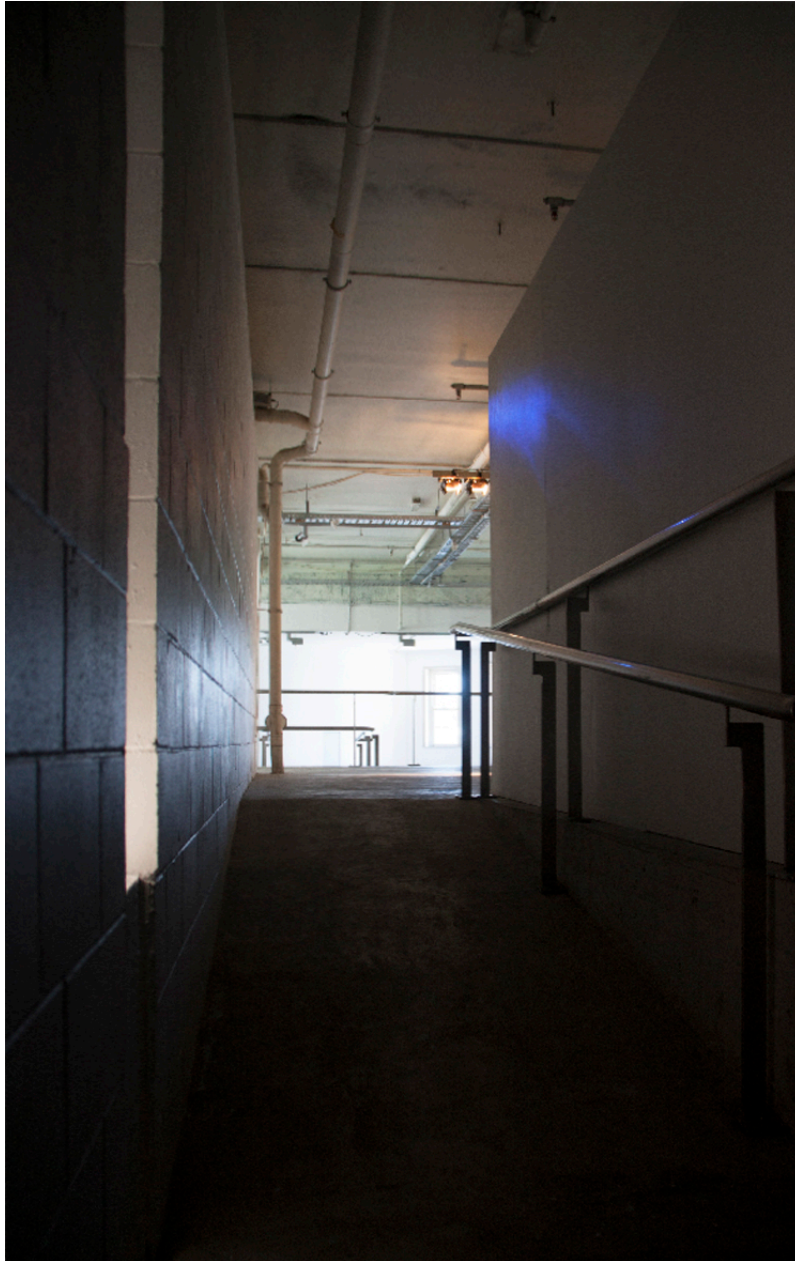

Figure 48.

Figure 49.

Figure 50. (October 2013). *Install 22: Part 2.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III (passageway). Duration: 4.40 minutes (without loop).

Part 2 of the install involved a moving image being projected onto the freestanding wall that lines the passageway. Tyre-shine was lightly sprayed onto the wall where the projection appeared to create a shimmering effect/reflection.

The moving image – that was originally used in *Install 8,* (pgs 15-16) – was of a light filmed during its clockwise and anti-clockwise rotations. By lining up the edge of the moving image with the edge of the wall, a blue presence appeared to be emerging from and eventually retract into the corner of the wall.

As viewers made their way up the ramp/corridor during the daytime, the projection would slowly start to disappear and once they reached the end of the wall, it would cease to exist. However, if it were a gloomy/cloudy day outside or during the night, the viewing experience would be like that in *Figures 52* and *53,* thus enabling viewers to potentially have two different experiences.
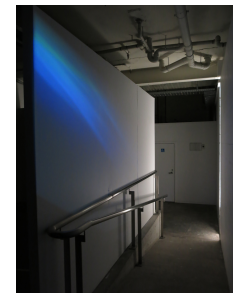

Figure 51.
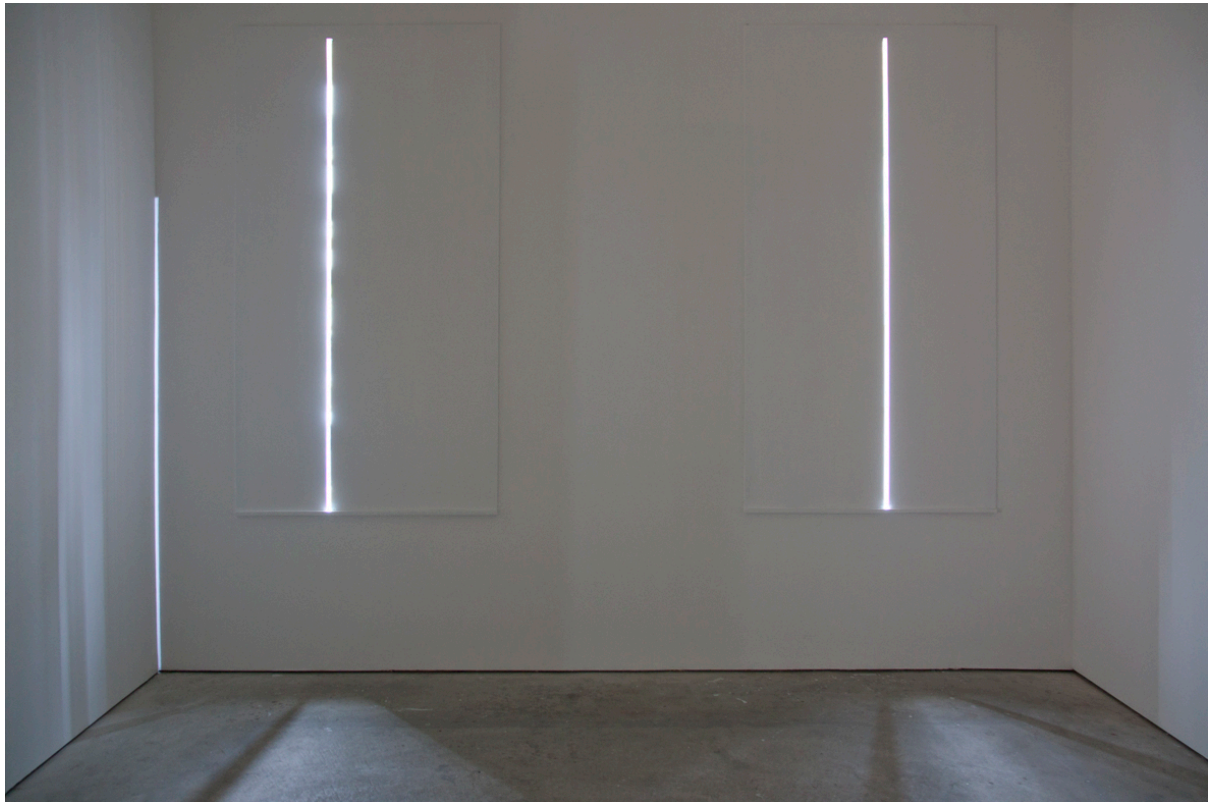

Figure 52.

Figure 53.

Figure 54. (November 2013). *Install 22: Part 3.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III. Duration: unlimited.

Part 3 shows how two windows were boarded up with wood, leaving a 1.5cm gap/strip somewhere along them, allowing for the daylight to enter. Two Dedo-spotlights were also added to the space and these replicated the strips along the windows.

As vehicles outside drove past the gallery, their movement and reflections were projected onto and travelled across the walls, ceiling and floor, therefore activating and consistently transforming the whole space. However, during the daytime, if the weather was gloomy/cloudy, the shadows cast into the space would be vague/non existent and the movement from vehicles would not be projected onto the walls, ceiling and floor, whereas, if it was a bright, sunny day, the shadows would be highlighted and the movement caused by vehicles would be visible.

During the nighttime, the light cast into the space would be minimal, so viewers would be left with the two Dedo strips and a minute amount of street lighting that would make its way into the space through the 1.5cm window gaps, as seen in *Figure 54*.

Figure 55.

Figure 56.

Figure 57.

Figure 58.

Figure 59. (November 2013). *Install 22: Part 4.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III. Duration: unlimited.

Part 4 of the install shows how a strip of floodlights was attached to a piece of wood that was connected (with cable ties) to the lighting track to create – in some sense – a wall of light. Even though there was no physical wall and the only visible component was the pooling of light on the ground, the heat radiating from the floodlights was what created this sense of a vertical, yet invisible presence. The white walls on either side of the piece were also activated due to the bouncing of light, and as a result, these odd yet intriguing glows or presences were created, as seen in *Figures 61* and *62*.

The strip of lights was positioned on an angle, as to be out of sync with the architecture, which is visible in *Figure 61*.

Due to the intensity of the lights, the weather or time of day did not affect the original state of the piece, however, at nightfall the work would inevitably be amplified, as seen in *Figure 63*.

Figure 60.

Figure 61.

Figure 62.

Figure 63.

Figure 64. (November 2013). *Install 22: Parts 1-4*. Different viewpoint during the nighttime.

Figure 65. (November 2013). *Install 22: Parts 1-4.* Different viewpoint during the daytime.

FIGURES LIST

Figure 1. (May 2012). Still from: *Kushti Prayers by Ervad Cyrus Daji.* Installation and performance in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes

Figure 2. (May 2012). *The Rawan Jashan Ceremony of Sanaya Vispi Buhariwalla.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 1 hour and 42 minutes

Figure 3. (June 2012). Still from: *Talk Week.* Installation and performance in Level 1/2 stairwell and Level 2 foyer. Duration: 3 minutes

Figure 4-5. (June 2012). Still from: *Talk Week.* Different viewpoints

Figure 6. Nyen, H.T. (May, 2013). Still from: *The Cloud of Unknowing.* From St Paul Street Gallery, Auckland. Retrieved from http://www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz/talks/5th-auckland-triennial

Figure 7. Nyen, H.T. (May, 2013). Still from: *The Cloud of Unknowing.* From Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland. Retrieved from http://aucklandtriennial.com/artists/

Figure 8. (April 2013). Still from: *Install 8.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop)

Figure 9-10. (April 2013). Still from: *Install 8.* Different viewpoints

Figure 11. (2013). Lantern from Install 8. Installation in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop)

Figure 12. (2013). Drafting paper from Install 8. Installation in Test Space. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop)

Figure 13. Viola, B. (1992). Still from: *Slowly Turning Narrative.* From Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://collections.lacma.org/node/177735

Figure 14. (January 2013). *Install 1.* Installation in Test Space. Duration: 2 minutes (without loop)

Figure 15. Davison, J,A. & Simpson, M.J. (2006). From Journal of Cataract & Refractive Surgery. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0886335006001520

Figure 16. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 1.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop)

Figure 17. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 2.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 3 minutes (without loop)

Figure 18. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 3.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 2 minutes (without loop)

Figure 19. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 4.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 2.50 minutes (without loop)

Figure 20. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 4.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: 2.50 minutes (without loop)

Figure 21. (May 2013). *Install 15, part 5.* Installation in WM 404. Duration: unlimited

Figure 22. Turrell, J. (1967). Still from: *Carn, White.* From Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://www.kaynegriffincorcoran.com/artist/view/1/james-turrell/

Figure 23. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Installation in Level 1/2 stairwell and Level 2 Foyer. Duration: unlimited

Figure 24-27. (June 2013). *Install 16.* Different viewpoints

Figure 28-29. Janssens, A.V. (1999). *Mists of Immediacy.* Retrieved from http://www.installationart.net/Chapter2Immersion/immersion03.html#mistsofimmediacy

Figure 30. (July 2013). *The Lab, Transforming Topographies: Day 1.* Installation in 5th Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery. Duration: 21 days

Figure 31. (July 2013). *The Lab, Transforming Topographies: Day 18.*

Figure 32. (July 2013). *We of Soft Edges, Transforming Topographies: Day 1, The Lab.* Installation in the 5th Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery. Duration: 21 days

Figure 33. (July 2013). *We of Soft Edges, Transforming Topographies: Day 1, The Lab.* Different viewpoint

Figure 34. (July 2013). *Install 18: Talk Week.* Installation in Level 1/2 fire exit stairwell (contained). Duration: unlimited

Figure 35. (July 2013). *Install 18: Talk Week.* Different viewpoint

Figure 36. Eliasson, O. (2006-2011). *Your Rainbow Panorama.* From ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark. Retrieved from http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/your_rainbow_panorama_4.html

Figure 37. Eliasson, O. (2006-2011). *Your Rainbow Panorama.* From ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark. Retrieved from http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/your_rainbow_panorama_17.html

Figure 38. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Installation in Level 1 fire exit stairwell (contained). Duration: unlimited

Figure 39-41. (August 2013). *Install 19.* Different viewpoints

Figure 42. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Installation in St Paul Street Gallery Three (passageway). Duration: unlimited

Figure 43-45. (September 2013). *Install 20: Same STORY different COLOUR.* Different viewpoints

Figures 46-49. (October 2013). *Install 22: Part 1.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III (passageway). Duration: unlimited. Different viewpoints

Figures 50-53. (October 2013). *Install 22: Part 2.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III (passageway). Duration: 4.40 minutes (without loop). Different viewpoints

Figures 54-58. (November 2013). *Install 22: Part 3.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III. Duration: unlimited. Different viewpoints

Figures 59-63. (November 2013). *Install 22: Part 4.* Final installation in St Paul Street Gallery III. Duration: unlimited. Different viewpoints

Figure 64. (November 2013). *Install 22: Parts 1-4.* Different viewpoint during the nighttime.

Figure 65. (November 2013). *Install 22: Parts 1-4.* Different viewpoint during the daytime.

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