

# Out of line

MFA Thesis

Konstfack

University College of Arts

Crafts and Design

2016

Agustín Ortiz Herrera



## Content

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Foreword                                     | 3  |
| Introduction                                 | 5  |
| Out of line                                  | 7  |
| Projects description                         |    |
| Breakdown                                    | 16 |
| <i>Om Jag var där &amp; Köttinspektionen</i> | 24 |
| An accidental message on violence            | 30 |
| Methodology                                  | 32 |
| References                                   | 35 |

---

## Appendixes

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Appendix 1 : Transcription of the Round Table<br>organized in occasion of the exhibition<br>of the video installations<br>"Om Jag var där" & "Köttinspektionen". | i  |
| Appendix 2: Translation of the Interview<br>made for the video installation "Om Jag var där".  | xi |

## Foreword

*"Confusion is obviously a nonlinear state. In a confused environment the unexpected can happen at any time. It is a very productive and beautiful state of mind to me, yet it's something that we often have difficulty appreciating."*

Carsten Höller<sup>1</sup>

I wonder what does it mean to be lost. The verb *to lose* has different meanings. One might say that to be lost or to lose always implies the existence of a reference framework. For instance If I am lost in the space that means that I can not recognize where I am, then, without a familiar spatial reference, it is hard to take a direction that responds to a specific will. In this case to be lost is dependent on a specific knowledge and therefore it is pointing to the lack of this distinct threshold. The resulted frame of mid from that phenomena can be named as *confusion*; a lack of self direction. Most of us could say that this one is a difficult state of mind, rather an undesired one. Thus it is understandable that most of the time the words *lost* and *lose*, in a binary opposition structure, are fitting into a negative category. But what if we try to do the opposite exercise in the linguistic level, ie, we will find the antonym of the word *lost*, when referring to an entity outside their usual spatial context which can not recognize. The appropriate word is *found*. We will then analyze what this word means in opposition to the proposed meaning of *lost*. According to the dictionary it means getting something that we are looking for, in the example exposed before it would be a space reference that would be familiar to us in order to locate ourselves. The curious thing about this definition is that it involves a clear activation of desire. The paradox of this situation is that for the activation of the necessary desire to start the search first a specific event must occur, in this case it is to get lost. Accordingly one could say that in order of having the active desire of finding we need to experience first some sort of disappointment or , in other words, to enter the confusing state of mind that involve the fact of getting lost. If that is so then I wonder: why do we consider as negative the emotional condition that involves being lost? Perhaps in a more existential level one might venture to affirm, that the desire of starting a quest (so inherent in human beings and in many cases becoming an engine for vital progress) exists thanks to a knowledge gap and even to the absence of a threshold that needs to be searched and defined.

Despite of what has been said, this essay is not addressing a philosophical discourse on the state of mind that involves being lost. Nevertheless as a reference I would like to point out to the study of the thinker Rebecca Solnit in her essay: A Field Guide to Getting Lost.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carsten Höller in conversation with Dough Aitken, *Broken Screen*, Distributed Arts Publishers, Inc 2006

"To lose yourself: a voluptuous surrender, lost in your arms, lost to the world, utterly immersed in what is present so that its surroundings fade away. In Benjamin's terms, to be lost is to be fully present, and to be fully present is to be capable of being in uncertainty and mystery."

In both my artistic practice and in my life journey, I suppose that like for the majority of human beings, I experienced this "confusing" state of mind on several occasions. However, in recent years I have been aware of a change. That specific mood, especially in my creative processes, unlike to have a negative influence, It has proved to have an interesting positive impact. Something close to an optimal state of mind that serves me as a referential framework to develop some of my projects. I would like then to start this essay with this reflection as some sort of notice to mariners or simply as a note of an idea, somewhat generic, that undoubtedly will be intertwined at certain times and in certain areas of this essay.

## Introduction

English is not my native language. That's why sometimes I find myself lost in translation when I try to read or understand some English elocution. As most of non English native speakers, sometimes I have to stop and think about the different meanings of words and expressions, in occasions conflicting with my own language. For instance the idiom "Out of line" has different semantic interpretations. One of them is: not properly lined up in a line of things. Other: beyond certain set or assumed limits. And another: [of something said or behavior] improper. Just to name some of the definitions. Precisely because of this diversity of meanings that it is interesting for me to have chosen this language expression as the title of the essay. Not because it must necessarily fit into a specific category of meaning, otherwise, precisely for the contrary, because of its convenient ambiguity. But in addition to the interpretations of the linguistic and cultural field it is also possible to enter in, let say, metaphorical interpretations. Perhaps this is the sphere in which personally I am more interested. One of the key concepts of the work presented in this essay arises from the questioning of the technical assumptions in the editing of audiovisual, what is commonly called the *timeline*. In relation to this technical process, the title of the essay is presented as a kind of a metaphorical counterpoint, as an antagonist that demands attention, hoping for opening to new semantic possibilities through the critical opposition. At the same time I try to question the structure, in my opinion strongly hierarchical, of the most widespread audiovisual language. For instance the one used in film and TV industry, massively consumed through the media groomed by the new technologies.

On December 28th of 1895 the Lumière brothers projected their first experiments resulting from technological evolution of photography. A continuous light projection of snapshot that offered the illusion of movement. Arguably, this was the starting point for the consolidation of a new language: the audiovisual. I want to take a moment to distinguish between the definitions of audiovisual and cinematic language, as they often are used interchangeably. I think that the *audiovisual language* definition implies a broader and generic category that includes any communication gender based on the reproduction of images and / or sound that uses image (defined as light projection) and sound in a space-time domain. The other, the cinematic, points towards the existence of a specific product that implies: a specific formal aspect, a particular use of the more generic visual language, the existence, most of the time, of a film industry and the display of these products in specific rooms, for the audience sitting in a dark room, or across all kind of screens like computers, TV, phones, etc. Therefore I want to focus on a speech that began a reflection upon the concept based on the definition: *audiovisual language*. Consequently, for one hundred twenty years the Western world have been using this language based on technological advances that, already for some time, has been considered as "universal"<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> "In the context of the pre-War period, the universal language metaphor was mobilized largely against the threat of censorship. At the same time, it functioned to mask the contradiction of the industry's bid for middle-class respectability and the simultaneous marketing of film as a democratic art benefiting in particular the working class, immigrant, and urban poor; in that sense, it was part of the long-term strategy of submerging all class distinctions in an ostensibly homogeneous mass and consumer culture." Miriam Hansen, *The Hieroglyph and the Whore: D.W. Griffith's Intolerance* in Jane Gaines, *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The paradigm Wars*, Duke University Press 1992

Nevertheless it seems to me that *the audiovisual* not always has a good reputation within the realm of languages<sup>3</sup>. For instance if we compare it with music, a language whose nature has been considered widely, at least in western culture, as universal, we observe some basic differences. It is impossible to know the exact birth of music as a cultural event as it seems to go back to the beginnings of civilization. The technology needed to produce music is irrelevant in its genesis since the humankind is able to produce music merely with the body. However it is true that the musical language has evolved with technology adding new expressive possibilities. To summarize we can point out that music has always existed in civilizations and is considered a global art form that has the power to connect the human race, overcoming borders and linguistic and ideological barriers. I wonder whether the audiovisual language has reached such a high distinction that seems to enjoy music. In part, this essay wants to take as its premise the idea that the visual language is indeed a global phenomenon that is constantly expanding and processing. This fact has been accentuated in recent times with the advent of the Internet phenomenon that has enabled the fact that the audiovisual media is spreading exponentially. Furthermore, also recently, the necessary resources for audiovisual production through technological advances are already available to some of the population who previously had no easy access. Not only we consume massively audiovisual products but also produce them en masse.

---

<sup>3</sup> In this essay I am not so interested in getting into the debate of whether it is or not a real universal language but I believe that if one considers that the use of audiovisual language is sufficiently spread it should be considered in a global scope. As an example of this ongoing phenomenon I refer to the article published in the newspaper "The Guardian" by journalist Steve Rose on how the so called Islamic State uses today the audiovisual language.

Steve Rose, *The Isis propaganda war: a hi-tech media jihad*, The Guardian 2014

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/07/isis-media-machine-propaganda-war>

## Out of line

### Consuming messages

In my experience as an art teacher in a secondary school education I could see how the generations born at the dawn of the new millennium have an intuitive approach to audiovisual production. In other words, they do not need too many technical explanations for the task of building a narrative discourse using audiovisual language. They simply undertake the task, with different results and qualities, but with a complex free kind of attitude. Some studies point out that this interest is related to the needs of social integration of young people and the belief that the audiovisual media can help them in their interpersonal relationships <sup>4</sup>. In my classes I used to explain that when I was a kid there was no Internet. Some of my students heard that story with astonishment, as if they had never imagined a world without the global network. And the truth is that it is already hard to picture an actual world previous to the conditions created by the recent *hyperconnectivity* <sup>5</sup> revolution. In this day and age the ability to produce audiovisual is highly appreciated, moreover, as well as scoring above, it is already available to a large portion of the world population. We are no longer only the *Global Village* that Marshall McLuhan predicted, but we are a kind of a *global village producing media*. I wonder what effect will have (or it is already having) the phenomenon of the mass production of audiovisuals. Will it be maybe introduced as a core subject in schools? Will it be considered as a requirement to have a "appropriate" life development? Will there be a demand in the labor sphere of those basic skills? We have not reached those terms yet, but we will probably see some changes in the coming years.

I'd like to go back briefly to the aforementioned comparison of the audiovisual and the musical media in its category of "universal languages". One can observe that even though the musical production is highly appreciated, is not yet an essential requirement for human development. And at this point I would like to reflect on certain nuances, which I think are crucial, between the musical language and audiovisual. It is about the possibilities that both languages have as an instrument to facilitate certain power structures. As noted by the philosopher Carmen Pardo Salgado in her essay, *The power of music. The music of power* <sup>6</sup>, music, already in ancient civilizations, has been considered as an interesting element when it came to influence the population. But it is perhaps with the audiovisual language where this influential ability is developed on a large scale. So narrates Susan Sontag in her article *Fascinating Fascism* in a review of the photographic work

---

<sup>4</sup> "The crucial role that interpersonal relationships has in adolescents, preferably with friends, and the use that young people give to ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) as instrumental facilitators thereof, causes us to consider what role it can play the audiovisual media in their quality of life and subjective welfare." Sara Malo Cerrato, Dolors Navarro Pou, Ferran Casas Aznar, *The use of audiovisual media in adolescence and its relationship with subjective well-being: A qualitative analysis from an intergenerational and gender perspective*, Athenea Digital, Universitat de Girona 2012

<sup>5</sup> As Anabel Quan-Haase and Barry Wellman define in their studies.

<sup>6</sup> "Since ancient times, music has been addressed by the government of a state. Plato, when he expounds his political ideal, it gives a good account of the right kind of music to form the spirit of the citizens." Carmen Pardo Salgado. *El Poder de la Música. La Música del Poder*, in *La música més enllà del comerç*, Indigestió Musical SL 2008

"The Last of the Nuba" by Leni Riefenstahl comparing it with her first cinematographic works made for the Nazi regime <sup>7</sup>. Therefore one might say that the difference lies in the intensity of the influence that the audiovisual medium is able to impose. Let's not forget that the audiovisual language can also integrate music, so obviously the first is able to create synergies with the second.

Perhaps as a result of the awareness of its high influential efficiency that we see today countless examples of audiovisual products seeking influence one way or another in a given spectrum of the population. Some of them might seem aware of their propaganda effort and others less so. We can appreciate this phenomenon every day in countless audiovisual products from already classic television commercials to the "homemade" videos of the *youtube star* trend. In this context of permanent communication I wonder whether it is possible that some audiovisual product, of any nature, can avoid the perception of the influence of a certain political dimension, in other words, I wonder if the audiovisual language has, already intrinsically, a culturally constructed political exponent that becomes more evident than in other communication and / or artistic events, such as music or painting. Perhaps it has been inevitable due to the place in which the audiovisual is located, that is going hand in hand with the phenomenon of *hyperconnectivity* and having itself consolidated, many years ago, as a permanent presence in the center of the public sphere, especially in Western culture through the mass media. I would leave time away from the debate over whether any artwork possesses an inalienable political nature of its essence. But I do want to depart from the basis of the assumption of the idea that most of the audiovisual products that we consume can be interpreted within some political sphere and in many cases, already from the original conception of these products, there is a political idea behind, despite of his or her producer being conscious of it or not, that serves as ideological background for these productions.

I understand that the equation: higher audiovisual productivity times greater possibilities of communication enabled by the global channels creates a constant and exponential cultural production around that particular medium. This synergic relation creates such a gravitational force that just few audiovisual products might be free from a propagandistic suspicion (political). It is normal, therefore, to assume that today, when it comes to communicating political ideas, the audiovisual is positioned as one of its backbones. Umberto Eco notes that: "Today, political events are nullified unless they're on TV." He also warns us that: "The democratic civilization will only survive if we make of the audiovisual language a provocation for critical reflection and not an invitation to hypnosis." <sup>8</sup>

Therefore, from a historical point of view in the context of the history of audiovisual language, we find ourselves undergoing through an interesting period, and perhaps as well paradoxical. To illustrate this idea I would like again to rescue some of my experiences as a teacher in a secondary school. As I mentioned some of my students seemed to have a natural talent in the production of audiovisual. They seemed to understand how to articulate a sequence of images with a symbolic content and thus could produce and edit a specific audiovisual product. Most of these teenagers feel a strong attraction towards the medium that motivates them in a fairly functional way, although at the same time they may have problems in other school settings. They managed to communicate certain messages in a relatively effective manner. But when it came the time to analyze critically the semantic content of their productions they provided a low key response and showed a skimpy interest. In other words, they had a critical analysis capacity well below its productive abilities. That experience leads me to believe that, for the most part, the young generation of audiovisual producers fall

---

<sup>7</sup> "Nevertheless, the idea of her resisting "Goebbels' attempt to subject her visualization to his strictly propagandistic requirements" should seem like nonsense to anyone who has seen *Triumph of the Will*—the most successfully, most purely propagandistic film ever made, whose very conception negates the possibility of the film maker's having an aesthetic or visual conception independent of propaganda." Susan Sontag, *Fascinating Fascism*, in *The New York Review of Books* 1975

<sup>8</sup> Umberto Eco, *Apocalípticos e integrados*, Lumen 1985

behind on their critical spirit that might serve them as a motivation for an analysis. If this is a general scheme it would seem urgent to resolve this paradox. So states Peter Greenaway: "The teaching of the audiovisual media should be integrated across the curriculum, so that reading and writing visual messages would be a coherent skill that students deem as relevant to their lives as reading and writing verbal language".<sup>9</sup> We can say that we live in a time when the ability to produce audiovisual is greater than ever before while the interest in the analysis of these audiovisuals, at different levels, political, semantic, symbolic, metaphorical, is concentrated mainly in sectors intellectually concerned meanwhile it is reluctant to reach to a broad spectrum of the population in a form of a "culture of analysis" of the media. Some intellectuals like Greenaway or Eco point out to the necessity of making an effort to integrate the critical spirit in the educational field and in basic levels. I agree, and in my opinion I think that resistance responds rather to an ideological issue.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the way many audiovisual products associated with entertainment are consumed. In most cases these products are intended to be consumed in our leisure time, and therefore we tend to associate that time and those products with concepts like fun, escape, relaxation or recreation, among others. This relationship between audiovisual products and leisure is deeply rooted in Western culture and continues to expand globally so one might observe that emerging economical powers like China, India or Brazil, have already an expanding audiovisual industry that takes as a reference the successful Hollywood business model. Furthermore that relationship between entertainment and leisure often prevents a more critical approach to the commercial audiovisuals, which ones are somehow disguised as intellectually null or innocuous products while the reality is that the vast majority of them are not. In the other hand capitalist culture encourages an unconcerned pattern of conduct. At some point everybody inside the system is consuming clothes, appliances or food, in many occasions in a normalized compulsive way and without much consciousness that these acts mean support for a particular economic and political system. All kinds of audiovisual products are also consumed that way. It could be said that Capitalism has also well oiled the machinery of audiovisual consumption that it is inscribed in our culture. However, discussing this matter is not the final goal of this essay. But as a note I just want to throw some questions arising from my interest in the political sphere: Can one talk about some partial<sup>10</sup> illiteracy in the audiovisual media? Who could benefit from this situation? To whom it might be convenient that critical thinking is not a common denominator when consuming audiovisual products? I do not intend to answer these questions in this essay, but I think it's important to put them on the table since I have observed that sometimes some of my artwork generates them in an implicit way.

In the article named "*Images of the world. A brief introduction*" Stephan Pascher<sup>11</sup> talks about Harun Farocki's film "*Images of the world and the inscription of War*". At that article Pascher rescues an optimistic observation of Farocki:

"I think people have become very smart at deciphering images and knowing how relative the meaning of an image is and how much it has to do with context and interpretation... and with pre-knowledge. As Dziga Vertov said, 'Unlike dogs, images don't have tags.' "

---

<sup>9</sup> Peter Greenaway, *¿A quién corresponde la enseñanza de los medios?*, in Roberto Aparici, *La revolución de los medios audiovisuales*. Ediciones de la Torre 1993 p. 33-43

<sup>10</sup> "Partial" because as I mentioned before the paradox is that more and more people know how to produce audiovisual but not enough to read them critically.

<sup>11</sup> Stephan Pascher, *Images of the world a brief introduction*, in *Merge* magazine #16, 2006

Pascher answers him:

"They do, however, make a special kind of impression. They have a sort of unfair advantage; a natural power. It's what makes them suspect as purveyors of truth. Roland Barthes called this photography's rhetorical effect – marking its privileged place in the hierarchy of evidentiary witness."

It is true that, generally speaking and specially in Western culture, we have developed a high ability to connect with the audio-visual narrative, to understand the message. But in my opinion, I think the ability to capture and analyze the subtext and to highlight it in a critical way are not as common. Pascher continues his reflection on the medium, demonstrating the high complexity that we face:

"And yet photography, in particular documentary photography, like the metal press in Farocki's film (another form of mechanical reproduction) belongs to an earlier "regime" of representing the world – it is in a sense outdated. This is precisely the point. Imaging technologies have moved beyond the simple recording of an impression, to translating that impression into code – both, as a set of rules (of conduct), and as a set of symbols that are arbitrarily assigned meaning – the representational "analog" to what Deleuze has described as the replacement of a disciplinary society (Foucault) with a "control society." The "Kino Eye" (the cinematic lens), which for Vertov was an extension of the human eye, has given way to the "Robo Eye," the absolute replacement of human with machine."

Indeed, technology has advanced in a way that is so commonly used that it replaces the humankind duties. It is even able to make decisions for us. In a conversation with Marvin Jordan the artist and theoretician Hito Steyerl gives a practical example of this current phenomenon:

"Think of Twitter bots for example. Bots are entities supposed to be mistaken for humans on social media web sites. But they have become formidable political armies too – in brilliant examples of how representative politics have mutated nowadays."<sup>12</sup>

It seems as if the crisis of representation, explained by Jean Baudrillard in his book "Simulacra and Simulation" has moved into the realm of identity of the producer of images. The boundary between human and mechanical producer has been diluted so that we are not able to distinguish between the two at times. Pascher also cites again Farocki to illustrate this issue:

"Farocki sees the moment of Auschwitz as 'a turning point in human history,' but a turning point that is constituted as a crisis in representation: the experiment to see if human beings can be totally dominated reflected in new automation technologies capable of making images independent of a human subject; technologies with which we are now all too familiar. Recording and Domination/Coding and Docility. 'How the two go hand in hand.' Think about the normalization and accelerated implementation of surveillance and monitoring devices. Think Patriot Act and Homeland Security. Think the next time you use an ATM, or check your email. Think. The crisis of representation: How to see what no human eye is capable of seeing? How to represent the unrepresentable? How to imagine the unimaginable? – a Romantic problem reaching its apotheosis in Auschwitz; and its

---

<sup>12</sup> Hito Steyerl in conversation with Marvin Jordan, Politics of Post-Representation, in Dis Magazine 2013  
<http://dismagazine.com/disillusioned-2/62143/hito-steyerl-politics-of-post-representation/>

surpassing, a postmodern problem posed in the question: How to decode a code? Turn a code around - Invent a new one. Farocki provides an example: a prisoner resistance movement that entailed the creation and exchange of coded messages culminating in the partial destruction of a gas chamber. 'From these pictures come a code. And from this code a picture.' A different picture."<sup>13</sup>

This ambiguity of authorship of the audiovisual medium and the over-exposure that we have to them adds complexity to our already complicated relationship with the media. Steyerl defends the ability to undo the way:

"Warhol's prediction that everybody would be world-famous for fifteen minutes had become true long ago. Now many people want the contrary: to be invisible, if only for fifteen minutes. Even fifteen seconds would be great. We entered an era of mass paparazzi, of the peak-o-sphere and exhibitionist voyeurism. The flare of photographic flashlights turns people into victims, celebrities, or both. As we register at cash tills, ATMs, and other checkpoints— as our cellphones reveal our slightest movements and our snapshots are tagged with GPS coordinates—we end up not exactly amused to death but represented to pieces."<sup>14</sup>

Curiously, the audiovisual medium, which had been conceived as a technological advancement to represent reality in a highly reliable manner, has proved a failure if we consider its original purpose <sup>15</sup>; and in turn a resounding success considering its indispensable position in Western society. The paradox is that the audiovisual medium is kind of an entelechy of reality. As Pascher said, it has the power to convince us that contains the truth. It preserves, despite that more than ever we are aware of the artificial construction of audiovisual productions and also we are aware that digital media enable the creation of virtual realities difficult to distinguish from reality itself, that aura of truthfulness in such a strong way that leads us to, on many occasions when we see any audiovisual product, a "Coleridgean" state of *suspension of disbelief*. No wonder, therefore, that the audiovisual media are considered key in the dissemination of political ideas. Especially in the more specific documentary genre. As Jill Godmilow reflects upon in a conversation with Ann-Louise Shapiro:

"So we're talking about a category that could include propaganda films the CIA produces for export abroad, television's *Hard Copy* and *CBS Reports*, Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, Luis Buñuel's *Land Without Bread*, Trinh T. Minh-Ha's *Reassemblage*, Ken Burns's eighteen-hour baseball series, Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, Fred Weisman's *Hospital*, the films of the contemporary German filmmaker Harun Farocki, Su Friedrich's feminist films, Raoul Ruiz's early non-fiction work, George Franju's *Blood of the Beasts*, Barbara Kopple's feature-length, Academy Award-winning labor dramas, and the work of certain American avant-garde filmmakers, such as Bruce Connors - just for example. How can they all be in one class? I think they all exhibit a common defining trait: inherent in their stance toward their audiences is the claim not so much to educate, but to edify. So I like to call this huge class of films "films of edification", or "edifiers". At least this label avoids the classic truth claims of

---

<sup>13</sup> Stephan Pascher. "Images of the world a brief introduction". Merge magazine #16, 2006

<sup>14</sup> Hito Steyerl, *The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation*, in Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux Journal Sternberg Press 2012

<sup>15</sup> As Lumière brothers depicted their own invention, a way of capturing real moving images. Later abandoning this idea as Louis Lumière stated in the first *Film Manifesto* of history: "The cinema is an invention without a future." Compiled in: Scott MacKenzie, *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*, University of California Press 2014

documentary and acknowledges the intention to persuade and to elevate, to raise up the audience to a more sophisticated or refined notion of what *is*.”<sup>16</sup>

### Towards the expectations

The Western culture of the audiovisual has also created a specific form of perception. By that I mean that in my opinion it has created a framework of specific knowledge. The cultural phenomenon has been followed by a construction of a code, in which our perception of it depends not only on what is perceived exclusively through the senses, but also, on our knowledge of the same medium and the cultural context. The curious thing is that we are not always aware of what we know about the medium. From a phenomenological<sup>17</sup> point of view it could be said that there is a strong subjective interaction with the medium, in many cases based on intuition. And I would like to make an example of a fairly common experience. Going to the movies with other known viewers. At the exit is very common to share impressions about the film. Sometimes, if the product has won it, the debate extends into a discussion of similar and different opinions that have been formed over viewing the footage. At such times it is evident that, despite the predictable attempts of audiovisual products (especially in the commercial cinema) for transmitting a message of a unified and compact form, inevitably interpretations are diversified to a greater or lesser extent. In my opinion the development of critical thinking that promotes dialogue and exchange of ideas is based on the existence of the necessary diversity of opinions. How can be enhanced the critical spirit in our contemporary commercial context<sup>18</sup> of massive dissemination of the audiovisual media? In my experience as a worker in the film and television industry I realized that, generally speaking, the ability to converge the most of the interpretations of the audience on a particular product is seen as a great value. Commonly the business world behind the audiovisual productions is afraid of the possibility that the audience have different or diffuse interpretations, or even “worse”, that they have divergent interpretations. This terrain is reserved for productions of *auteur cinema*<sup>19</sup> or productions in areas of the visual arts<sup>20</sup>. So it seems that the world of commercial audiovisual is characterized by a somewhat rigid structure. From a post-structuralist point of view one might say that this specific way to create a certain commercial narrative corresponds to a worldview strongly influenced by binary opposites. After all the success of a commercial product is measured by its ability to build consensus and ultimately for its effectiveness, understood as an unison acquisition of a message in broad sectors of the population.

“At that time, I worked long hours. I had little time to pause and reflect about my lifestyle. I felt lucky to have gotten a job that, in the eyes of the circle of friends I had at the time, seemed very interesting. I was part of a team writing the arguments of a soap opera that was in production for one of the most touristic regions in Spain. For work purposes I had to document myself on the wine production of that Mediterranean island. I never suspected

---

<sup>16</sup> Jill Godmilow in conversation with Ann-Louise Shapiro, *How Real is the Reality in Documentary Film*, Wesleyan University 2002

<sup>17</sup> “But phenomenology is likewise a philosophy that replaces essences into existence and can not believe that one can understand humankind and the world more than from its *facticity*.”, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Fenomenología de la percepción*, Trans. Jem Gabanes, Ediciones Peninsula 1975

<sup>18</sup> I understand that a few channels of massive distribution escape from this context because the Internet is already the great global platform where some can trade on a large scale with the information derived from our use of the medium.

<sup>19</sup> Filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, David Lynch and Kim Ki-duk.

<sup>20</sup> Visual artists such as Stan Douglas, Eija-Liisa Ahtila or Doug Aitken.

that, in fact, I was about to enjoy that research much more than the task that came afterwards. Working as a screenwriter for a local television soap opera involves a high level of submission to a way pompous hierarchy for the dimension of the job. Big egos for too little tasks. I have to admit I do not get along well with the injustices resulting from the abuse of power in a workplace. Unfortunately, in my country of origin, there is an implicit tolerance when it comes to professions with certain artistic pretensions. More you endure, farther you get. In a job with that level of stress I have to admit I felt like a fish out of water. I lasted not even one year. The failure at this long-awaited job led me to open an interesting chapter in my life, with many dark shades I have to say, but when I think in retrospect, lived with a rare intensity. I was absolutely lost, with no idea of what would be the next step. I can say that during this time I sharpened some senses that seemed to have been forgotten for a long time.”<sup>21</sup>

That widespread way to approach the audiovisual inevitably creates a strong culture of expectation on the same medium. One could say that, even an educated audience in consuming more alternative genres (sort to speak), might generate also expectations that respond to this cultural context. And it is precisely the concept of *expectation*, as later I will develop furthermore, one that interests me most in relation to my artistic research. Among these reflections some questions arise: How we perceive and approach audiovisuals? What preconceived cultural expectations we have on them? How this approach, perception and expectations can be challenged? All of them are leading the research process of my artistic practice.

## Strategies

Carsten Höller in his statement quoted at the beginning of this essay, talks about the confusion as: –a very productive and beautiful state of mind–. Höller also admits that this is a difficult state to appreciate. In line with these arguments I'd like to reflect on the nature of that reluctance to accept negative and productive states and therefore commonly regarded positive mental states. I believe that the prevailing structuralist mentality based on the binary opposition negatively influences us when to fertilize new ground for experimentation. In this sense I believe that a post-structuralist approach to the audiovisual industry, to enable understanding of the object (in this case of an audiovisual product) and in turn a questioning of knowledge systems that have produced the object, can be an interesting ally. Considering *the expectations* that are created around the audiovisual language the strategy of confusion may be even more interesting. Let's take a practical example. A spectator sits in an armchair in front of a large screen, the room darkens and the viewer is prepared to receive a series of visual and auditory stimuli in order to get induced to feel certain emotions and other mental processes. This common situation involves a whole culturally accepted paraphernalia which could be labeled as a "ritual". If the viewer exposed to that experience does not get what he or she expect is likely to react in a negative way, like getting up from the chair and go or complaining loudly. But nevertheless, this reaction will depend on the context in which this exhibition is registered, that is, the information that the viewer has on the audiovisual product that is shown and the expectations. It would not be the same for a spectator who goes to the movies to see the latest Hollywood production that for a viewer who knows that is going into that room to see a work of a certain visual artist.<sup>22</sup> But in any case I'd like to highlight that the viewer approaches to any of these areas with some specific expectations. One of the objectives I am most interested in pursuing is the

---

<sup>21</sup> Excerpt of personal diary.

<sup>22</sup> In the exhibition: *Rebel Dabble Babble Berlin* by Paul McCarthy & Damon McCarthy at the Völkshaus Theater, September 2015, Berlin. The audience accessed the cinema like space by paying a similar ticket price as in a film house.

creation of situations that demonstrate these expectations created by our cultural affiliations. I believe that the confusion may cause essential questions that encourage reflections. This field of research is the one in which the artistic experiments I am presenting are intended to move on. And somehow all the strategies I define aim to facilitate and promote the "ideal" state of confusion. It is therefore the pursuit of that state the ultimate strategy that influences the other, or in other words, the other strategies, the ones I describe below, which are also aimed at promoting confusion.

The most prolific strategy i use is the exploration of the possibilities of non-linear audiovisual media <sup>23</sup>. Which stands as the linchpin in finding that state of confusion, somewhat ideal for a more open and critical approach. It was inspired by the line of artistic research that some authors began early in the previous decade as Doug Aitken, Stan Douglas, Eija-Liisa Ahtila and recently continued by artists like Ryan Trecartin, Ed Atkins and Isaac Julien; in addition to those who already had practiced earlier in their surrealist films such as Luis Buñuel and Maya Deren.

Again based on the assumption that unmet expectations can cause reactions near to the state of confusion, a second common used strategy is the one to explore the boundaries between the documentary and the fiction. To approach the definition of this strategy I would like to draw a framework to reflect on the difference between documentary and fiction genres. From my point of view documentaries are also subject to the epistemological description that indicates that the visual language is an interpretation of reality <sup>24</sup>. The ability of the film to generate a new reality is indisputable, but what is questionable is whether that reality faithfully corresponds to a series of events in the past. The documentary genre necessarily requires a reconstruction of the events in the post-production (editing). But even if it is recorded with live images over some events, the fact that the camera is framing a certain space and discriminates others, inevitably, makes it as a partial view of the total. In the documentary, the point of view, the unavoidable fractional selection along with the typical temporal compression of these products, takes us away from the idea of fidelity and brings us to the illusion of reality, which is capable of generating, in some cases , very efficiently. That's maybe why the documentary genre is able to generate with more power the feeling that what we see is a memory of a true story, and therefore is perceived as owning the truth. One could then say that after that "typical" perception it comes an expectation over a narrative gender. I believe that the idea of exploring the uncertain terrain between fiction and documentary opens up the possibilities that can also lead to us to the not much desired state of confusion.

Finally the research on the possibilities of the exhibition space in audiovisual installations. I start from the idea that generally speaking we are in use to consuming audiovisuals in a predetermined way, usually in a static manner in front of a screen. But what if the proposal includes the possibility that the body moves around or

---

<sup>23</sup> "I think the experience of nonlinearity and fragmentation is with us all the time. They are sometimes seen as dangerous and are often associated with chaos. But in many ways, they're truer to reality." Dough Aitken, *Broken Screen*, Distributed Arts Publishers, Inc 2006

<sup>24</sup> "Ann-Louise Shapiro: We have been speaking about documentary film. I want to start with a question about the word documentary. How comfortable are you using that label? Jill Godmilow: I do use it, for convenience, but I hate it. Why? Because everybody *thinks* they know what the term means, because everybody has seen some television programs labeled documentary neither televisual "white papers", that is, so-called objective journalistic presentations of social problems, or history programs that chronicle certain social movements, or portraits of famous artists or historical figures and the like. Unconsciously embedded in these forms called documentary is the conceit of "the real", which substantiates the truth claims made by these films. These general notions about documentary film produce a fairly limited understanding of what non-fiction cinema can be and do. ....Better than documentary is the label "non-fiction", but it's tainted too. It's a term built on a concept of something *not* being something else, implying that because it's not fiction, it's true." Jill Godmilow in conversation with Ann-Louise Shapiro, *How Real is the Reality in Documentary Film*, Wesleyan University 2002

need to be moving to complete the experience? In this case it is about prospecting the possibilities of audiovisual medium and its installation in the space to provide an experience in which the body and its movement in space plays an active role in acquiring sensations or obtaining knowledge.

## Narrative

I as well want to briefly approach the apparent digression between audiovisual narrative and non-narrative. Basically I find the non-narrative nature of the image difficult to differentiate, indistinctly whether it is motion or not whether it extends in time or not. And that I consider so because, whether we have the ability to “maybe” connect with the message, the narrative always emanates from the image as a result of an expressive intention of its producer that responds to the concordance of hers of his intentions within the cultural context in which they are inscribed. The result of the mere existence of such relation, for minimal it might be, is therefore a narrative event that is necessarily part of a symbolic framework, which distinguishes the language category. As an example I recall the paintings left by our ancestors in the caves of Chauvet in France, we do not know for sure if at the time <sup>25</sup> that occurred the man had already developed a verbal language, that could have happened or not. Perhaps these images were the first necessary step to introduce a pre-oral language symbolic framework. But in any case the images that we still see in these walls are related forcibly to some intention of the one producing them, obviously difficult for us to discern which intention was. In any case in that relation it is already registered, inevitably, a story. Nor do we know if the artists of those caves were aware of this relation and therefore of the story they were telling, which is perfectly plausible. But even the absence of consciousness of that intention does not prevent that the communication process has inevitably been put to work.

Then I wonder who doesn't like to hear a story? Storytelling is somehow an essential part of the communication of our everyday life. Since immemorial times the stories we tell, read, hear or see are always imbued with a symbolic intention that is structured in different narrative levels. From the generosity and the creativity of the narrator and our capacity for analysis and interpretation as recipients of the message depends that the relationship between the two is balanced and fruitful.

## Projects

Following it comes the description of the three artistic projects that are integrated in this essay as a practical extension of the same. Each project addresses different topics but take part of the same plan of development of the artistic method in which my artistic practice is based on.

---

<sup>25</sup> Aurignacian Era, 32.000 BC.

## Projects descriptions:

### *Breakdown*

*"Farocki regards "Images of the world" not as "a fully worked-out film so much as the design or blue print of maybe several films," He wants to leave things open. A certain manipulation of the materials is obvious, but one intended to raise questions rather than provide simple answers."*

*Stephan Pascher.<sup>26</sup>*

During the month of August 2015 I had some spare time and I knew there were about to come several busy months, at least until the end of the master in the coming year. So then I decided to dedicate myself entirely to research on topics that recently interested me or had emerged at that time. Interesting and intense is the task of finding about such diverse issues and also pleasantly light, without having to worry about the possible objective or subjective connections between topics. One can spend hours jumping from one interest to another through the links that offers the network. Often you end up where you least think, and find unexpected treasures not to mention the connections established at the very moment of the discovery or also later when you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about what one had been so intrigued the previous day. If the idea of Serendipity is combined with the luck to have a certain time not mortgaged to any particular use it may result in one of the most intense pleasures a person can experience.

Formally speaking the eight audiovisual pieces that integrate the installation are intentionally mixed. All have differences among themselves, for example in the narrative tone, the quality of picture and sound, assembly, the concept of time, editing, subject matter or the origin of the images, some are self-produced, while others come from appropriations drawn from the network. At a formal level all have different treatments and generally could claim to have little in common. Perhaps the only thing is that they have been produced by the same hand and all correspond to a period of very specific production between August and October 2015. Each product has been developed from an idea conceptually disconnected from the other, and thus also they have an individualized formal development. In short what I show in Breakdown is the artistic production of a portion of time. Several windows with chaotic views to the creative and thought processes of a particular moment in life. A kind of biography of the specific interest I had in the past and a catalog of formal solutions for the development of ideas.

One of the most frequent questions from the audience of the installation dealt with my reason to expose the audiovisuals in such a fractured way. (Perhaps the only clue featured in the exhibition is in the title of the piece, but also has a certain ambiguity.) To explain it I would make a speculative exercise. Imagine for a moment that I decide to install the audiovisual in a more conventional way, sort to speak. In this case also imagine that my intention is to ensure that a particular communication is established with the audience. In other words, in each screen distributed in the space I project a video that begins and ends in a constant loop in the hope that the viewer see all the videos in an orderly fashion. In that case I wonder if that strategy will ensure that the viewer gets the impression that I have calculated taking place. Possibly it would not happen like this, since foreseeably the perception of all this different audiovisuals, with diverse styles and natures, will hinder the unification of a message. Therefore I am aware, in advance, that the proposal involves a basic assumption: any viewer who will watch different audiovisual in the same space, inevitably will try to find some sort of story line

---

<sup>26</sup> Stephan Pascher, *Images of the world a brief introduction*, in Merge magazine #16, 2006

or a common bond that links a determined speech, she or he will seek a guide to hold on to. But my proposal walks precisely in the opposite direction. I assume that the plot or the common link do not exist beforehand, or at least are not predetermined by any will, not even mine. However it does not mean that the viewer actively could find an argument between all or some of the pieces. I'm actually interested in open it to possibilities of free associations of spontaneous nature. That is why the distribution of the fragments, somewhat haphazard, responds to an attempt to promote such associations. Perhaps this method is as close to a collage of images distributed in several screens scattered in a space deliberately designed so that the audience will not be oriented easily. A collage wouldn't be a collage if one follows the rules and formal scales of realistic representation. And a maze wouldn't be a labyrinth if it doesn't challenge the spatial memory of the ones entering in there. The same applies to this proposal. All elements have been combined following unequal scales with the intention to challenge hierarchies and automatic positions established between spectators and audiovisual products. Normally the viewer of a video art for example, is positioned passively waiting for the communicative act to happen. As I explained in the introduction of the essay, in visual communication the concept of "expectation", the cultural construction of what is expected from a given product, is very pronounced. What interests me about this experiment is to subvert that expectation, shaking the interfaces, ask the viewer to have the active role that he or she thinks does not belong. **The other elements, fragments of videos, unsynchronized time, confusing space and little designed to stay long, are also active in their own way. The interesting thing for me is to facilitate the interaction of those wills and various intentions, sometimes amalgamated in conflict.** Hito Steyerl discusses about the relationship between the artwork and the viewer in a reflection about the representation of space in perspective:

"This space defined by linear perspective is calculable, navigable, and predictable. It allows the calculation of future risk, which can be anticipated, and, therefore, managed. As a consequence, linear perspective not only transforms space, but also introduces the notion of a linear time, which allows mathematical prediction and, with it, linear progress. This is the second, temporal meaning of perspective: a view onto a calculable future. As Walter Benjamin argued, time can become just as homogenous and empty as space.<sup>27</sup> And for all these calculations to operate, we must necessarily assume an observer standing on a stable ground looking out toward a vanishing point on a flat, and actually quite artificial, horizon. But linear perspective also performs an ambivalent operation concerning the viewer. As the whole paradigm converges in one of the viewer's eyes, the viewer becomes central to the worldview established by it. The viewer is mirrored in the vanishing point, and thus constructed by it. The vanishing point gives the observer a body and a position. But on the other hand, the spectator's importance is also undermined by the assumption that vision follows scientific laws. While empowering the subject by placing it at the center of vision, linear perspective also undermines the viewer's individuality by subjecting it to supposedly objective laws of representation."

I am interested in Steyerl reflection on the hierarchical relationship she is pointing between the artwork and the viewer. I wonder if it is possible to subvert the hierarchy through a reversal of the conditions that generate certain expectations in the audience in front of a work of art. Breakdown wants to investigate these possibilities through strategies based on role reversal, spatial and temporal confusion and juxtaposition of images and sound. In that sense it pronounces Magnus Bårtås:

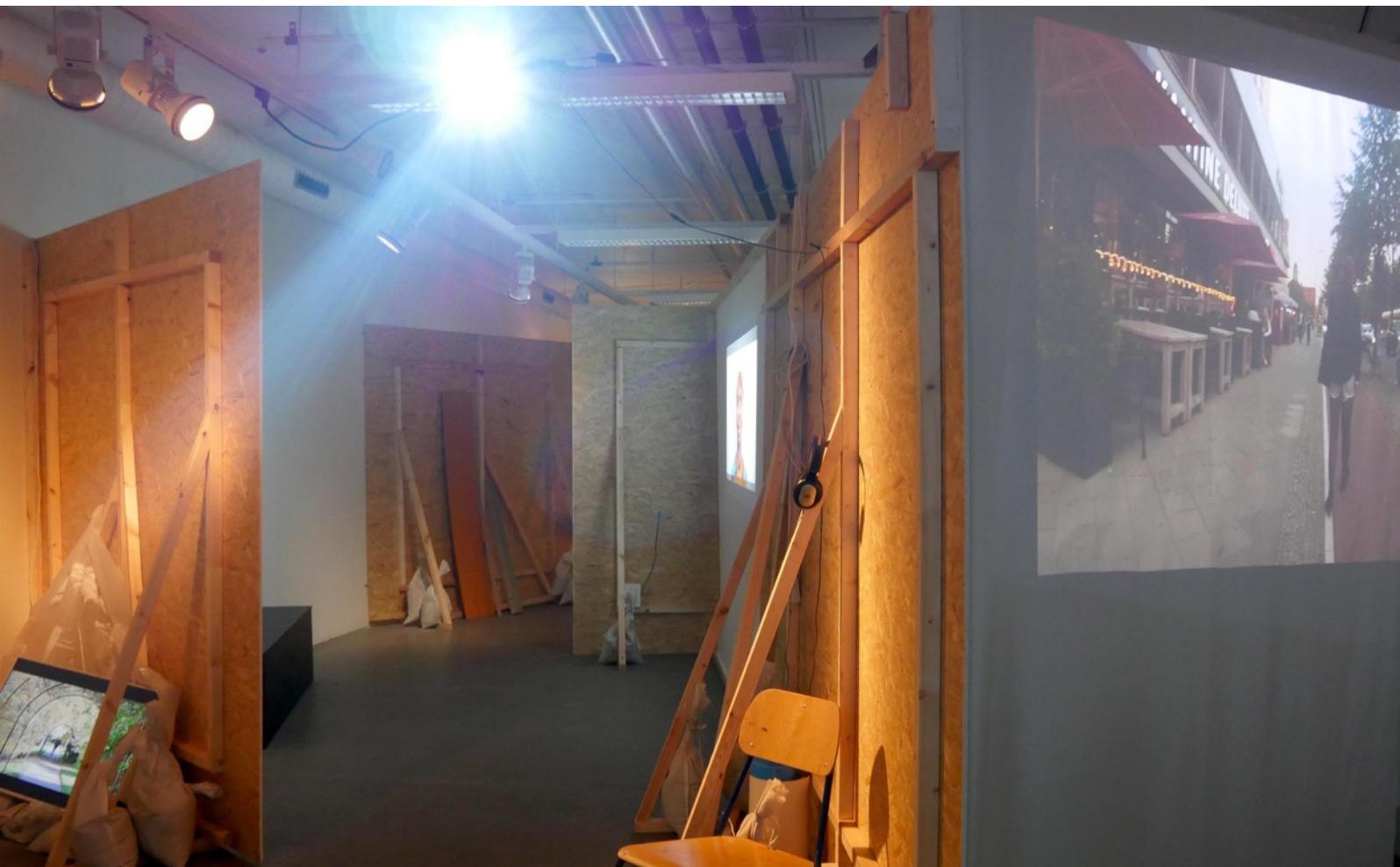
---

<sup>27</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, Schocken Books 1969 p. 261. As aforementioned in Hito Steyerl, *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*, in Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux Journal Sternberg Press 2012

"I believe the act of juxtaposition, the very combination of objects, images, words, and actions and the temporal elements in the sequences of combination are crucial for any artwork. I think this is clear for anyone who is editing a film or a video: it is in between the images - in the joints and splices between images - that we can experience something unknown and upsetting."<sup>28</sup>

Deleuze also speaks of the active role of the viewer in the temporary re-construction that occurs in the work of Antonioni *Blow up*:

"Hence the importance of false continuity in modern cinema: the images are no longer linked by rational cuts and continuity, but are relinked by means of false continuity and irrational cuts. Even the body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer of time, it shows time through its tirednesses and waitings."<sup>29</sup>



---

<sup>28</sup> Magnus Bartås, *You Told Me*, ArtMonitor 2010 p.18

<sup>29</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Robert Galeta, University of Minnesota Press 1997

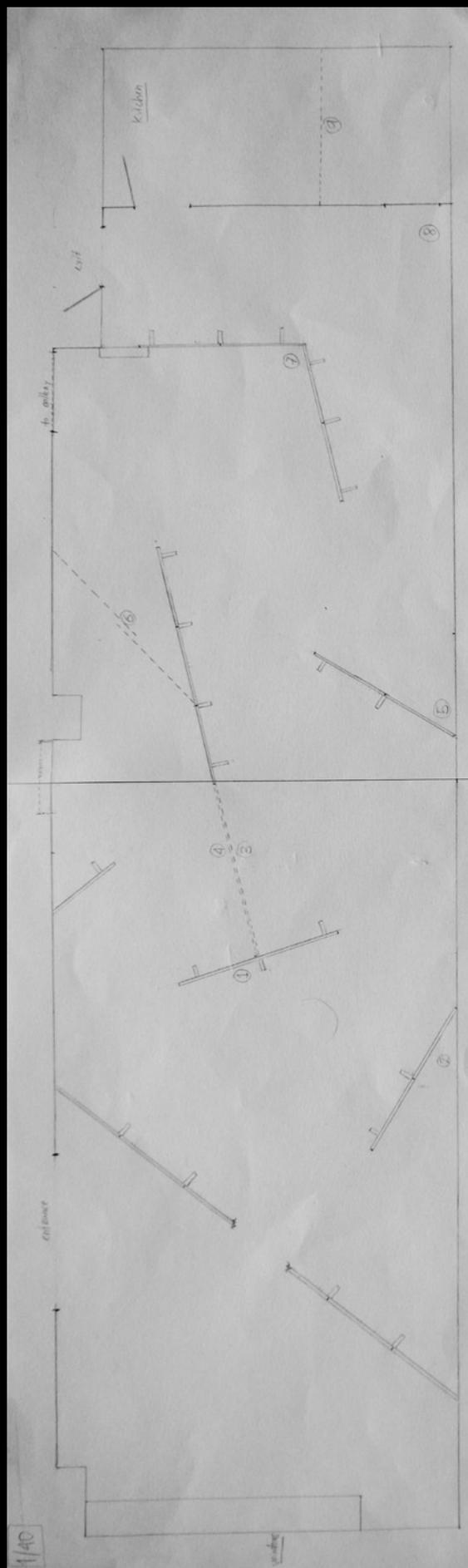
The installation extends in a rectangular space of 125 square meters. A series of wall partitions create different spaces and in turn creates different possible routes. The walls are placed in a way to design a labyrinth and as such it aims to disorient who lies within. Some walls are used as a projection screen, others has a screen installed in it, a total of 9 screens distributed in the space. There is also a sound piece installed in a wall right after one entrance broken wall. This sound piece contains two different headphones, in every headphone you can hear an elocution called "Decalogue", every Decalogue explains that after hearing the ten opinions you need to decide if you agree about 5 or more. Depending on what Decalogue you agree the most you go to the left or to the right, so the viewer itinerary will be affected by this decision based on binary opposites agreement.

For the video installation I produced 8 audiovisuals. Every audiovisual is different from each other. Different topic, recording technique, narrative and use of film language. Every product has its inner coherence, one of them have been produced from a script of a traditional narrative film language, another is the result of a new edited storyline from online appropriated footage, another is an experimental, nonlinear juxtaposition of a moving image portrait exercise, other is a minimalist documentary of people working in different tasks at the same institution, other is a re-interpretation of an excerpt of a well known experimental silent film (*Men with the movie camera*) captured from an online source, another is a documentary with a more traditional look, images and narrative voice over, and the last one is a circular narrative experimental short movie.

All this movies are not exhibited in a one movie-one screen correspondence. Just one of them fits into this category, the *Men with the movie camera* excerpt interpretation. In *The Shift*, two other videos are sharing the same screen in a constant unsynchronized juxtaposition, and the rest are chopped in time sections and spread in different screens, in a way that one can see different sections of different audiovisuals in a random order. The installation is a physical maze as well as the structure of the video exhibition. The audience is invited to wander in the space meanwhile they make their own choices. To put together some pieces of the puzzle or/and create personal associations among all the products, and the the relation among the audiovisuals and the aesthetics of the design of the space distribution.

All the walls of the maze have two very distinct sides. One of them is a smooth white surface meanwhile the opposite side shows itself as raw as a wooden wall in a backstage, some props used meanwhile the construction are accumulated against the "back" side of the walls.

[Descriptive video link](#)



## The 8 Audiovisuals

These eight audiovisual products are designed with an internal consistency, that is, each has an individualized approach in its conception and in its elaboration. One should keep in mind that these divergent characteristics are the result of an expressive intention. For example, the temporal conception. Some of them, particularly Commodification, The Gaze and Objects of desire, have been produced following a linear argument, therefore they have a beginning and a predetermined end. Others, however, have a non-linear conception of the argument and can be viewed from any random point without prejudice to a better understanding of the piece. Five of these audiovisual have been divided into three pieces each and every piece is projected in conjunction with two other fragments in a continuous loop on one of the five screens that welcome these five films. The viewer has no indication of where to find the fragments and in what order one should assemble them. Two other videos, corresponding to the piece named The Shift, share the same projection surface at a constant analog mixing. While the video Division of Labour is the only one presented individually, not mixed with any other audiovisual work.

### The Decalogue, (sound piece) 2'

On a white wall placed at the entrance of the installation, dividing the room in two halves, there is two hanging headphones, one on each side of the wall. These are two sound stations. There is no instructions but common sense tells us that these headphones are there to listen to the sound emanating from them. In each of the stations sound can be heard an utterance. At the one on the left a female voice announce to us that what we hear is a Decalogue and asks us to listen carefully, will depend on the level of agreement reached with the Decalogue that the viewer is directed to the left or else should hear the decalogue on the right. At the one to the right we heard a male voice that offers the same instructions as the female but changing directions and opposite utterances that the previous Decalogue. If the viewer enters the Decalogue game she or he will be directed to the left or right following the directions of the result.

[audio link left](#)  
[audio link right](#)



### The unknown. 17'

In 2015 I made two trips to the city of Berlin, on every trip I stayed for a week in the city. On the first trip I made a documentary video (which is not included in this piece) composed by fixed portraits of one minute duration of spaces that interested me meanwhile I was exploring the city. Many of them were very close to the typical tourist places I visited but none of them shows a recognizable face of Berlin, so the result is a portrait documentary about Berlin that could be any other big city in the world. A few months later, on my second trip to the city, I decided to stick with that exercise of recognition and documentation of my experiences. In this case I focused on the inhabitants of the city, some of them permanent, some others temporary ones. The result is a series of 15 portraits of strangers made with a hidden camera that I had mounted in my chest. I followed and recorded those people, chosen at random for a few minutes as they walked through the streets, avenues or train stations and subway platforms. Later, when I returned home from the trip, I decided to watch the footage while writing a comment on the images I was watching, most are purely speculative comments about the people I'm after. Later I edited this video with a voiceover, reading the comments I had written about each person, superimposed on the moving images. The structure of this piece is not designed linearly, so that the viewer could start viewing on any random point without prejudice to a better understanding of the narrative.



[video link](#)

## Working place. 11'

As the previous one, this audiovisual piece does not have a strictly linear structure, therefore, it lacks a beginning and an end. The start of the viewing at one point or another has no substantial impact on the narrative perception.

For almost two years I have been a user over Konstfack, the school where I studied the Master of Fine Arts for which this essay corresponds. The school occupies part of a building that was originally conceived as a phone factory. The enclosure is occupied every day for more than a thousand people who basically study, work or perform both of such activities in one day. The building consists of some common places like the library or classrooms and other more private as offices and departments. In addition, students have corresponding workshops to perform their tasks. In the building a variety of labor activities take place, some considered artistic meanwhile other are not. As a round of recognition and understanding of the activity in the building as a whole I decided to produce a visual record of some of these activities. Without intending to discern or classify their nature, but with an ethnographic approach. I made a video portrait about a number of people performing their tasks in different areas of the building. There is no voice-over and the narrative and plot is minimal.



[video link](#)



## Commodification. 14'

In late summer of 2015, when planning the video installation Breakdown, I found the news that Banksy had opened in the town of Somerset, England, his famous bemusement Park Project: Dismaland. The first news I read talked about how the tickets offered for sale online at a cost three pounds were quickly exhausted while later on the resale market some could reach a price of 1,000 pounds. The second story I read were talking about the interest shown by some shining Hollywood stars to visit the park which had generated rumors of that some of them wanted to invest their money in buying the project. It reminded me of the ongoing paradox in which one of the most today's famous artists lives. The more effort he seems to put on his "anti-system" art faster he seems to be swallowed up by the commercial oiled machinery comprising the art world.

This piece is the result of a documentary project using only material from my online research on the figure and works of Banksy. In the video I appropriate fragments of other documentaries about the artist available on the net and also promotional videos of Dismaland interspersed with press news I found during the days that the research lasted. The starting point is the development of a visual document that explains the almost immediate commodification of works by Banksy.

[video link](#)

## The gaze. 12'

This part is designed with a cinematic language. It is starred by an actor which one I directed and I worked with in a process of narrative construction usual for this type of products. We start from the basis of a written script and work to build the character in a few preliminary rehearsals. The planning of the visual language was consistent with the structure of shots and reverse shots and / or sequence shots predetermined in advance. There are two characters, one is a woman who can always perform in front of the camera. The other is the camera itself but one can never see it from the outside, nevertheless one can perceive it only and exclusively for the constant camera point of view and the interaction that women have with it. The story line follows the steps of the couple relationship with a romantic start, an intermediate in which life unfolds on a routine basis, a conflict in which the woman is overwhelmed by the constant presence of the possessive camera and a final in which the woman has to make the decision to break apart from the toxic relationship.



[video link](#)



## Objects of desire. 7'

In the spring of 2015 I attended the graduation exhibition the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm organized in the proceedings of the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in central Stockholm. During this exhibition, which uses many of the rooms, I was struck by the large number of plaster casts sculptures scattered through the spaces of the academy, especially in the atrium that serves as the entrance. But mostly what caught my attention was the fact that the sculptures kept the traces left by the boards of the molds when they were made. That fact prompted me to conduct an investigation into these sculptures and discovered that the building of the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts contains a collection of more than 800 plaster copies of some of the

most recognizable sculptures of classical art. All are copies made of the original from museums and private collections from other countries. At the time that the academy commissioned most of these copies Sweden had some weight in European geopolitics. It was therefore a matter state that artists had at their disposal the most reputable references to raise, with their art, the national spirit and thus find its place as a great European nation. Traces of the molds were left on purpose by craftsmen as a certification of authenticity of the copy. With these narrative elements I build a documentary that also includes a "queer" vision that wants to emphasize the fact that the vast majority of the sculptures are naked men possessing a flawless shape. It perpetuates the image of power in the idealized male figure. Today the understanding of the common uses in the past, like the traces of the molds in the sculptures, is more opaque to our eyes meanwhile other subtexts, not as widely admitted, can emerge like the homoeroticism implicit in the predominantly masculine power speech.

[video link](#)



## The shift. Continuous loop

It is perhaps the most experimental of all the audiovisual works that takes part of the installation. The piece consists of two overlapping projections on a single screen. Each screening consists of a series of portraits of thirteen people making facial gestures in front of a video camera. The two videos are similar in appearance and they share the same models. But each film portrays each model at different times. When projected on the same screen at the same time facial features are mixed and confused, sometimes it creates new personalities meanwhile identities are blurred. The two projections are repeated in a constant loop, but are not synchronized, each projector is out of phase and has its own rhythm yet they function in an analog form. Besides the two videos have different lengths so that the juxtaposition of pictures on the screen is always in flux. Sometimes the models in two videos match and faces of the same model are mixed, but most of the time we see various combinations.

[video link](#)

## Division of Labour. 6 '30' '

During the summer of 2015 I spent some days reviewing some classic silent film. Among those films was "Man with a movie camera" the director Dziga Vertov (Denis Kaufman) conducted in 1929 with a small team, his brother Mikhail Kaufman, his wife Elizaveta Svilova and himself. After the viewing I wanted to know more about the biography of the legendary film and its producers. I found out for example on family relations among the crew. Also that Vertov died young while Svilova dedicated her life to direct documentaries during World War II, including one on the discovery of the extermination camp at Auschwitz. I also learned that the shooting plan "Man with a movie camera" was responding to a production system characteristic of early cinema. That is, the labor separated by gender. The two brothers were mostly devoted to shoot with their cameras during long hours, mostly outdoors, while Svilova, Vertov's wife, devoted her time to process, sort and edit the film material. At that time the craftwork edition of celluloid was copious and intense, so it needed a large workforce in which mostly women were engaged. It resembled a textile sector in which women and children, as nowadays in some countries, was the biggest labor source. So I found it interesting to know that Svilova and Vertov continued with the usual division of labor of their environment and time. It is definitely "Man with a movie camera", even today, a milestone in the history of visual language. Dziga Vertov is also part of the myth of the pioneers of modern cinema. It is not so much so for his wife and editor of one of the movies that contributed the most with developments to the techniques of audiovisual editing, including the freezing of images, the slow motion and fast forward, the fade in and out, juxtaposition, nonlinear montage among many others. It is difficult to know for sure who promoted these formal experiments. Vertov is postulated in the credits as a global author of the work and Svilova only as an assistant editor. But we do not know if she is stated as this simply because at that time the editing was considered just an assistance work or if she really had no power of decision. When watching the film I stopped at one of the finest moments of the film. When Svilova herself is filmed by the camera doing her job. If we stop the frenetic editing and observe calmly we can see how those three minutes of footage are a tribute to the dedicated work of Svilova and in which other images of women and children overlap. As a homage to Svilova and her invisible and undervalued work I rescued that part of the film manipulating some of the moments, with the same style of film editing, freezing frames in which we can see briefly Svilova working, with the intention to appreciate her delicate concentration and devotion.

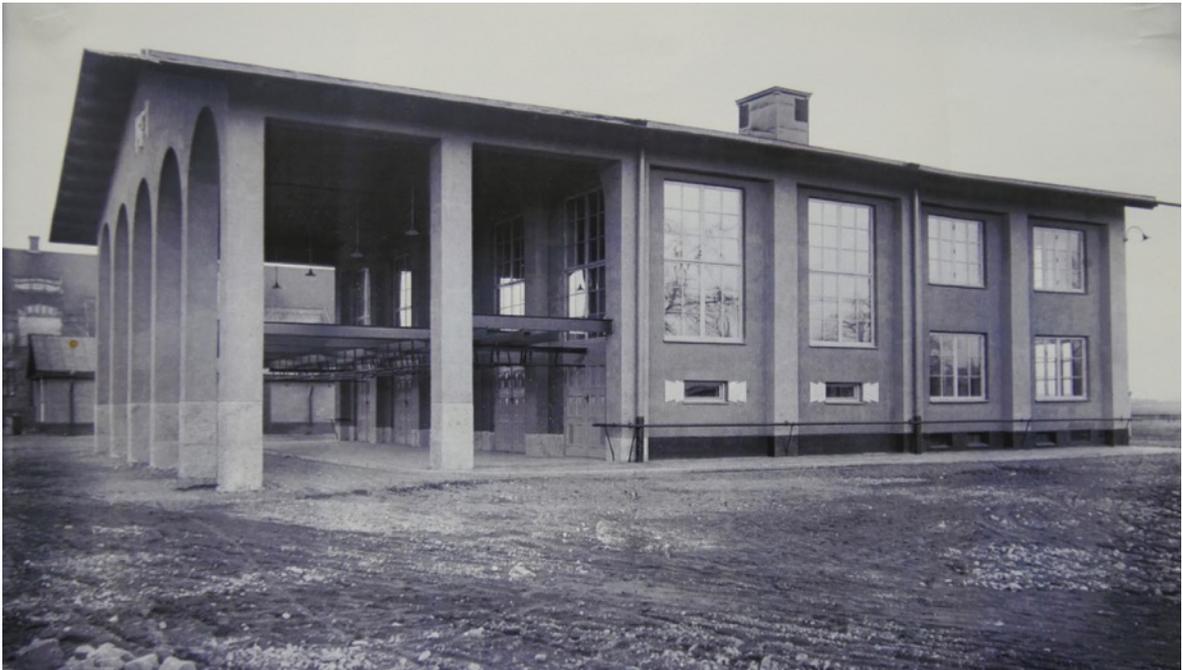
[video link](#)



## Om Jag var där & Köttinspektionen <sup>30</sup>

“Site specificity used to imply something grounded, bound to the laws of physics. Often playing with gravity, site-specific works used to be obstinate about “presence”, even if they were materially ephemeral, and adamant about immobility, even in the face of disappearance or destruction.”

Miwon Kwon <sup>31</sup>



Köttinspektionen in 1930. Uppsala Kommun Archives.

The photograph shown above corresponds to the original state of the building constructed by Anders Diös in 1930. This architect was close to the new functionalist architecture of the time and played an important role in the urban growth of the city. The building was originally intended as sanitation equipment for the growing village, the place to inspect and distribute meat. At that time the building was located on the outskirts of the city, in the picture can be observed that at the back there are only crop fields. This construction was declared of cultural interest listed building (K-mark). The space ceased to have its function when the city grew bigger and needed a more extensive services but it was preserved due to its status. Then it was quickly surrounded by an expanding industrial area located there to get the benefits of the proximity of the river as a means of transportation. At that point the building had diverse uses such as an art auction house, disco pub or municipal archives. Recently the place has become a cultural center that houses a theater company and an exhibition gallery run by a group of local artists named HAKA. Currently the former industrial area surrounding the building has moved to the new outskirts of the city leaving a free extension of space. That place is nowadays in the process of becoming a new neighborhood of apartments for sale. Köttinspektionen is located now in the heart of a process of gentrification.

---

<sup>30</sup> If I were there & Meat inspection

<sup>31</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One place after another. Site specific art and locational identity*, The MIT Press 2002

The reflection on the peculiar situation, although characteristic in gentrification processes, in which this building is placed is the starting point for a project that aims to make a broad reflection on the urban planning policy of the city. Uppsala appeared to my eyes as an archetypical example of the social shift that Sweden is experiencing: from the political commitment with the idea of equal and universal access to housing towards an urban development model based on property and debt. The Human Geographer Irene Molina talks about this issue:

“Awareness is increasing a lot and that is good news but the bad news is that the capacity of changing the course of events is really minimum, there is almost no possibility because, the whole system is organized in that way today, and that has happened very quickly in the history of Swedish housing policy. We have now an almost completely privatized housing market where the housing policy is reduced to the minimum today, as public policy I mean. The capacity of the state and the municipalities to counteract these marketizing trends are very small and even smaller for the people.”<sup>32</sup>



---

<sup>32</sup> Excerpt from the round table celebrated in the occasion of the exhibition “Om Jag var där” at *Köttinspektionen*. See Appendix I page vii

The collective art group HAKA invited me to work in a site-specific project at Köttinspektionen starting in the summer of 2015 and ending in an exhibition at the gallery during the month of January 2016. I worked in the space in different levels: as a metaphorical point of departure for a political reflection upon the urban planning national policy, as a film studio for a performance recording and finally as an installation space. The result of this process resembles a game of Russian Dolls where a viewer of the final installation can discover the strokes of all the layers.

During the summer of 2015 I made a 60-minute movie about Uppsala and its spaces in transition. I started with the Köttinspektionen surroundings and every day I was traveling around in bigger circles. The idea was to make a portrait of the places that are changing or are candidates to get changed in a short-term, some sort of a mapping on the city documenting a catalog of those kind of spaces. For a month I wandered through the different layers of the city stopping and filming places that called my attention, always having in mind my point of reflection upon the urban transformation. After finalizing the experience I came to a few conclusions but I found many questions. Who inhabit these spaces? What is going on in there? What will happen to those spaces in the next coming years? How is the city growing and who decides it? The market? The politicians? The people? My place of origin, Spain, suffered one of the worst crises in its history due to overexploitation of the property market. I wonder if the Swedish model of access to housing is approaching to what led to disaster for my country.

Then it came the second part of the project. As an experiment I invited a group of young actors, all coming originally from Uppsala, to watch the movie. For that purpose I installed a large movie screen in the middle of the Köttinspektionen bigger hall. For the actors I prepared a theatrical set in front of the screen where they were able to watch the movie. Then I was filming them while they watched the movie. I didn't give them much explanation about the city portrait film or my intentions while making it. I just asked them to be in front of a camera during the viewing. No rules were set, they could perform as they wanted, get in and out of the set, interact among each other, just watch passively or actively interpret the images with body language, everything was admitted. The result of this video recording was a second movie, this time about a group of people watching and acting my depiction of their own city. Later, and already out of the camera I interviewed them so they had the chance to explain their impressions after the experience. I recorded the sound of this interview and it runs entirely, without cuts or editing, in the final video installation. (See appendix II for an english translation of the interview)

The final installation that the viewer saw in the big room was the result of all the three layers of the project. As the screen I use the same background wall that I used for filming the Actors. In that screen one could see the two movies projected individually and running at the same time in a physical overlay. Also the viewer could hear the full interview as a voice over. These three audiovisual elements were running in parallel but not synchronized. Then, since they have different lengths, never matched in a predetermined time or decided beforehand. Randomness made the final film always different. Technically a total coincidence with a previous combination was possible if the three elements ran uninterruptedly for several months but what the viewer saw in that moment, the juxtaposition of two moving images and the audio, was different when she or he watched it again two hours later.

I named this installation "Om Jag var där", "If I were there", as its english translation. Check the link for a 30 minutes version of the projection:

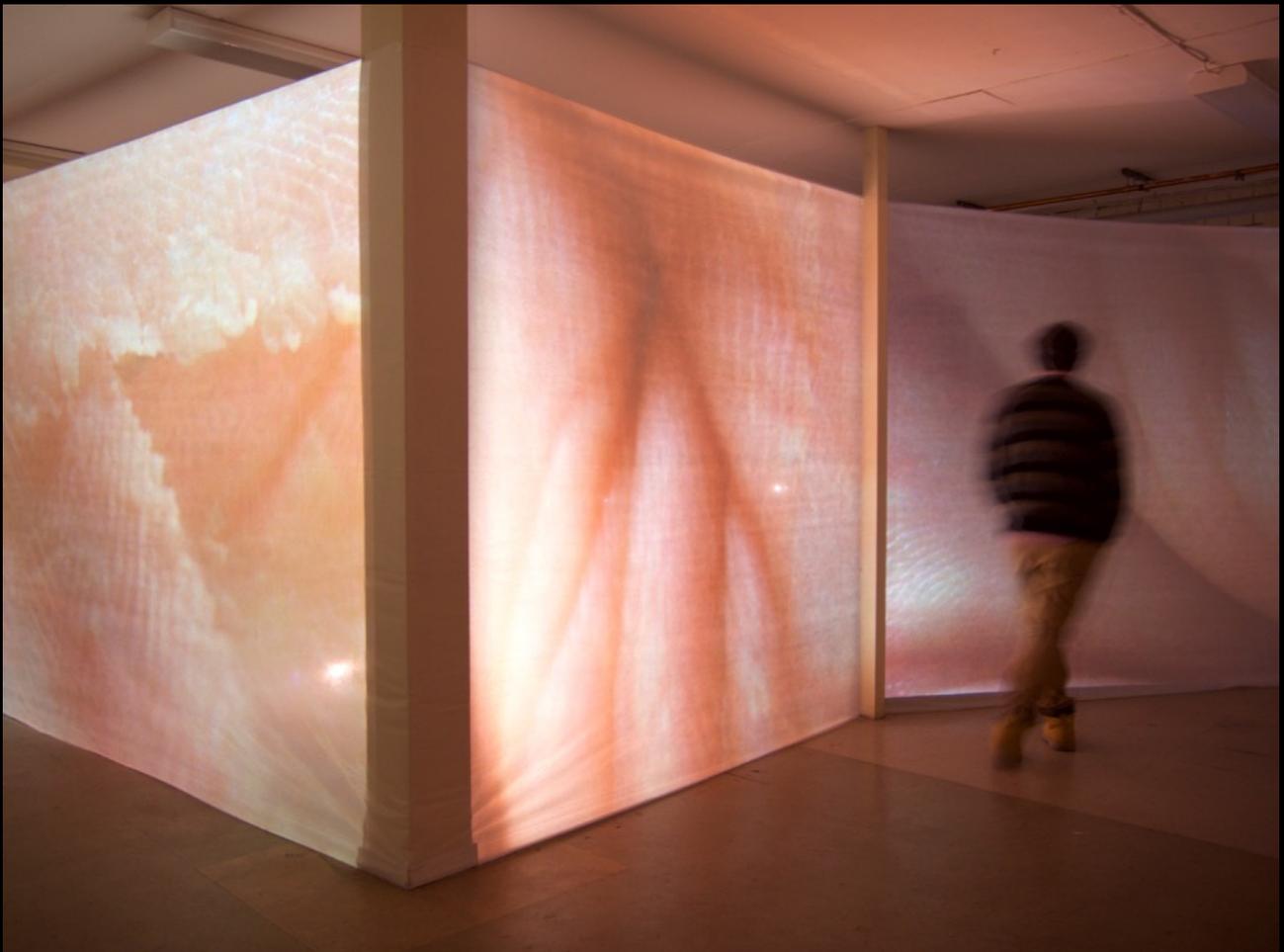
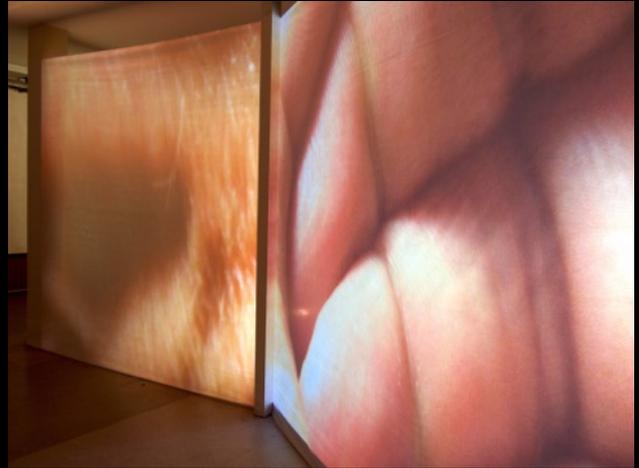
[Descriptive video link](#)





"Köttinspektionen" - "Meat inspection". Video installation

Before the viewers entered the big screening room they went through another video installation. This was a separate piece I made reflecting on the past of the landmark building (meat inspection agency) where the installation is located. It shows three built-as-walls screens where some still images are projected, some of them are pictures of skin, some other are photographs of sliced meat. Both categories are combined in a way that it is difficult to discern among them. This art piece wants to invoke echoes of the past while reflects on the uncertainty of the future.



Who is that gaze?

In her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey unfolds a number of powerful reasons based on her psychoanalytic look at the audiovisual to conclude that "the gaze" is the key element when reasoning the moving image phenomena:

"There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. Without these two absences (the material existence of the recording process, the critical reading of the spectator), fictional drama cannot achieve reality, obviousness and truth."<sup>33</sup>

Mulvey achieves to dissect with precision the reason why so many audiovisual reach their so much desired *suspension of disbelief* in the targeted audience and therefore communicate with highly efficiency their messages. Additionally, as I said earlier in the Perceptions and expectations section, in Western culture audiovisual products are consumed with the expectation that the *suspension of disbelief* occurs, otherwise, these products are considered of a low quality. Then what to do? How could we counterbalance this situation? I had these questions in mind when I planned the strategy in "Om Jag var där" installation, already from its planning and production.

When I went around the city, selecting a place, choosing a camera angle, grounding the tripod and shooting I realized how physical and specific was my point of view. Actually indeed, already from the inception of the approach, my persona moving around the city looking for places with a specific characteristics . My gaze was broader than the final framing, but the outcome was the result of a compendium of decisions based on intentions, wishes and knowledge. All of these responded to a very personal statement that was obvious to me when I reviewed the raw collected material. What would happen then if I showed this raw material to someone that doesn't have in mind my personal intentions? So that was exactly what I decided to do. I addressed the question of the multiplicity of looks. In the visual field: my look, my gaze on the space, the open invitation to see through my perspective, the actors reacting to my gaze, my look on the actors while watching my gaze over the city, then exposing the result in unsynchronized layers, the viewer watching the superimposed layers in the same place where the experiment was done, the look of the audience at the random juxtaposition of the two films. In the sound field: the actors complete interview moments after seeing the film, looping again and again.

Summarizing the experience I could say that separating all the elements and putting them to play in a non synchronized manner was pretty effective when creating the right amount of confusion needed to scare away the *suspension of disbelief* and rescue a certain distance and awareness of the audience. Neither the Actors nor the audience claimed to have seen, thought or feel what I had in mind when I started the project, however some of them confessed their meta narrative appreciation. In a way, the experiment did meet the expectations of breaking expectations.

---

<sup>33</sup> Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, *Oxford Journals*, (Originally published in 1975)

## An accidental message on violence <sup>34</sup>

“A photograph of a [...] factory does not tell us anything about capitalism and its sites of industrial production, because reality has slipped into the realm of functions and cannot be grasped as appearance.”

Bertolt Brecht

The quote of Bertolt Brecht is one of those lucky findings on the internet just at the right moment. I was at that time completing the definition of the project proposal when I found the quote in which Brecht accurately defines the starting point I wanted to depart from. But as the previous project exposed in *Köttinspektionen* all starts with a personal experience which is the one as a student in Konstfack, the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. This school moved in 2008 to its new location, the place where I am studying now. This building is what is called in Sweden a *K-mark* site, which means that it is a landmark building protected for its national interest status (same situation as the *Köttinspektionen* place). The construction was a flamboyant new telephone factory builded in 1939 by the international successful electronics company LM Ericsson. At that time the building was made according to a strict functionalist directive. Furthermore it was worldwide famous for successfully apply in its architectural planning the Taylorist theories that were revolutionizing the industrial productivity. As well, a new neighborhood was raised next door to fulfill the needs of the new arriving workers.

Nowadays this still massive building is owned by another big Swedish corporation that rents part of the building to different business and other institutions like Konstfack that it is located in the former heart of the factory, what it was called originally the “main factory”. When one walks around the school it is obvious that it was an industrial place, even though one doesn’t know about the building history. As an artist interested in the transformation of spaces and the perception of them I found fascinating the fact that an Art School was now operating in this particular space and that for that reason I was expending long hours in this environment. Then this building and my reflection upon it is the starting point of the project. Its history and its actual use interlaced with my own perception of the space and its past and present narrative is going to be used as the ground for the project. My intention is to elaborate a set of audiovisual pieces that will integrate the different “typical” elements of a documentary interweaved with a fiction movie in an experimental way. Three are going to be the final products that will be projected in three different screens sharing the same room (see drawing below). Each movie will address the metaphorical value of the point of departure using different strategies. The three movies are also not going to run in synchronicity, they rather will have different lengths so the audience will have different impressions. Also the screens are placed in a way that forces the viewer to move around the room in order to complete the viewing.

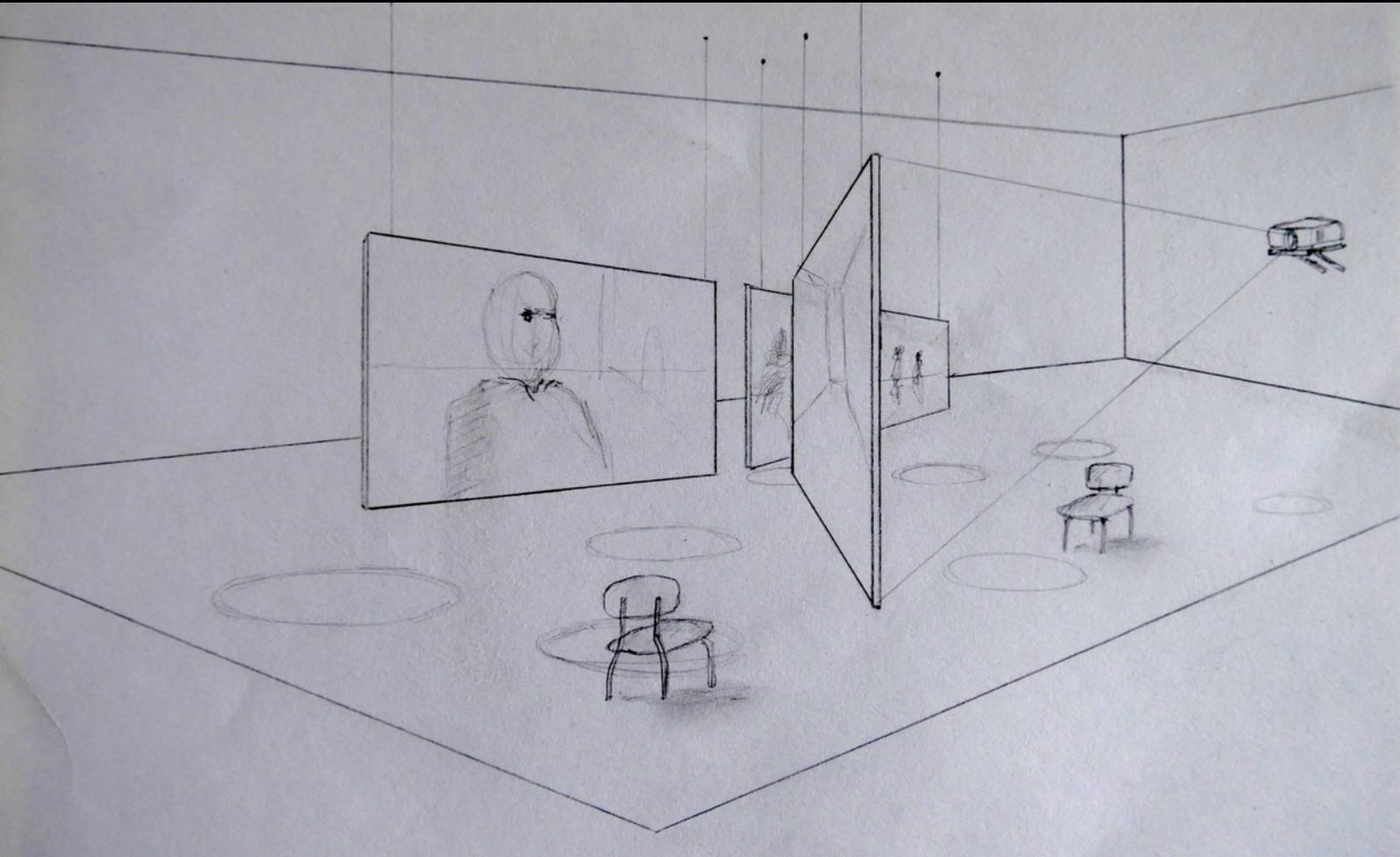
**Appropriation tale:** A documentary about a Finnish worker that came to Sweden to labor in a factory in the 70’s.

**Story line:** A film depicting the exercise of interpretation of a group of actors in the space of the former LM Ericsson and the actual Konstfack.

**Words of vision.** A fictional film about a future visitor of an historically important iron mining and forging in the north of Stockholm.

---

<sup>34</sup> The project defined here is under production at the time of writing this essay. It is therefore a definition of intent, which sets it apart from the two projects previously defined and already executed.



## Methodology

To forge oneself iron laws, if only in order to obey or disobey them with difficulty . . .

Robert Bresson <sup>35</sup>

### The hazardous

Obviously the role that the space plays in the projects described above want to be relevant. In the project *Breakdown* the space and its particular design is the essential element to dilute the static hierarchy traditionally established between the viewer and the audiovisual product. In that proposal, the viewer needs to move through a space that offers a variety of options. The design of the space does not attempt to direct the viewer in a certain way, on the contrary, it tries to generate a context of confusion that encourages a diversity of reactions. The viewer may feel upset in front of a proposal somewhat unorthodox, but precisely this context also enables the viewer to make decisions in a more spontaneous way. And will be those decisions, unpredictable for me as a producer of the work, which will complete the work of art. It is therefore in this proposal, the factor of chance a primary element when designing the exhibition space. Chance is also an important element in the *Om Jag var där* project, but in this case is not about a specific distribution of space. Randomness is manifested in what I like to call "analog editing". The exhibition space is quite like a film house in which the audience can sit comfortably in front of the screen. But the difference is that the two projections are superimposed on one screen. Besides the two projectors are not synchronized and the two films shown have different lengths. Therefore the coincidence of the images is random allowing different versions of the artwork. The viewers are also aware of this fact so it is in their hand to see as many versions as they want. It's just a matter of time, the viewers can wait or come back another day to appreciate different dimensions of the work, or they can just see it once. Also in the last project, *An accidental message of violence*, chance defines the possibilities of perception of the viewer. In this case the piece gathers the characteristics of the first two. The audience will need to move around the exhibition space to complete the viewing of the piece, in addition the spectator can only see two screens at the same time out of the three that complete the piece. While the screens show the movies asynchronously, so the matches are diversified to the maximum. Again the perception of this work will depend on the movement of the viewer in space and the random combination of the films. The objective is breaking the timeline. Using the space as a performative place for the viewer and a way to expand the cinematic language. Space is thus there an important element to create or modify meaning.

---

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in Scott MacKenzie, *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*, University of California Press 2014

## Sound and image

These two elements go together in most audiovisual products creating a powerful synergy in the service of the narrative line. In *Om Jag var där*, both the two images and the sound have their own tempo independent of each other. The piece itself becomes a kind of laboratory where one can experience multiple combinations of image and sound, some more effective, interesting, disturbing or confusing than others. In *An accidental message of violence* the three films have their sound synchronized but when exhibited in a parallel but not synchronized way the soundtracks can supplement each other, cancel, enhance, distort, melt or enrich one another, among other effects. Everything depends on the chance that aligns it. In any case it is about to expand the experimental capabilities of the medium as a method to resemble our way of thinking.

## The expectations

As introduced earlier in the essay I assume that the traditional relationship between the viewer and the audiovisual is based on the fulfillment of expectations. Thus the contradiction of such compliance can be an interesting destabilizing element when it comes to provoke a distancing of the viewer. In *Breakdown* the unity of five films is divided and distributed in three different screens, each piece in turn shares the screen with other fragments of different films. The linearity of these presented products is abruptly interrupted by a constant digression. The viewer might be shocked by this strategy and must decide whether to continue with the viewing of all the fragments on each screen or navigate through space trying to unite the fragments of the collage. Of course the viewer can also develop other strategies, and perhaps that is the real goal of the piece, to encourage each viewer to develop its own way of viewing. As a filmmaker I am aware that the audiovisual narrative is traditionally built on the so-called *timeline*. In a way I like the idea that the audience can participate in the editing process being able to create their own *timeline*. It all depends on whether the viewer is able to overcome the challenge of the fact that expectations are not met in an orthodox way. Also in *Om Jag var där* is the viewer confronted with a digression of the expectations. In this case it is about the classic structure: beginning, middle and end. The piece does not have a beginning and a determined end, in fact if the viewer would like to see all combinations between the two films and the sound (interview) she or he should see the piece without interruption for months, which is not likely to happen. But to see all possible combinations is not the goal and probably most viewers understand the proposal that way. Yet it is obvious that the idea of beginning and end is absolutely altered, here it is the viewer who decides when it begins and when it ends without prejudice that the quality of the experience gets better or worse. Rather, it will depend on the relationship established between the work and the viewers during the time they decide on the duration of the experience. In the case of *An accidental message of violence* the movies have a beginning and an end, so indicate the credits that are inserted. What happens in this case is that the viewer will not see the same match on the two screens that can see at the same time, also a third screen is always out the field of vision. Therefore in order to complete a viewing he or she will have to visit the three different locations and on each location that viewer will witness diverse matches of the screens. If the viewer analyze the situation will realize that the combination of the two images are always different, so she or he has it more difficult to establish a direct relationship with my intentions as an editor of the movies, which would be plausible in a traditional audiovisual product.

Finally a method I develop in the last project *An accidental message of violence*, is the practice of ambiguity when addressing the documentary genre. One of the three films that I show in that project has the formal aspect of a typical documentary but some of its parts, in a somewhat subtle way, make difficult to believe that what we are seeing is based on real events. The method is basically to use the formal aspects of a documentary

in a fiction production. The intention is to create expectations that can be later contradicted hoping to reflect on the disquisition between documentary and fiction.

Generally speaking I try to keep in mind the premise that it is inevitable that every viewer of any audiovisual delivers his or her point of view and therefore its subjectivity. These research methods aim to strengthen the subjectivity of the viewer rather than trying to converge the collective perceptions. The idea is to share and compile the viewer's experience in order to reflect on the experience itself. Could be said that the final goal is to create such methods that enhance the subjective perception of the audiovisual language. Maurice Merleau-Ponty talks about how the visual sensations come to us in a way that our field of view is delimited with a blur circle. Then the film screens are usually shaped in a perfectly delimited square which it might seem sometimes even more ambiguous since we never know what it is outside the frame. In the other hand machines are able nowadays to "see" better than us, in 360°, in night vision or x-ray. So then, I wonder if reality is closer to us or to the sight that machines are able to deliver us.

"The visual field is this contextual medium in which contradictory notions intertwine because the objects are not located on the ground of the being, where it would be possible a comparison, but captured, each of them, in its private context, as if they don't belong to the same universe. ... We make the perception with the perceived. And as the perceived it is obviously just accessible through the perception, we end up not understanding neither the one nor the other."<sup>36</sup>

Lastly I just wanted to give recognition to the artists that challenge with their art the traditional way of producing and perceiving audiovisuals and from which I take so much inspiration. The art work of Doug Aitken, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Stan Douglas, Chris Marker, Chantal Ackerman and Harun Farocki served me as a framework for the contextualization of my projects. As well some historical film authors such as Maya Deren, Luis Buñuel, Robert Bresson, Elizaveta Svilova, Dziga Vertov and Sergéi Eisenstein. Also outside the audiovisual world I'd like to acknowledge the influence of the literature of Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar with which I became aware of how the narrative is built on a line but then is weeded in our perception.

---

<sup>36</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Fenomenología de la percepción*, Trans. Jem Gabanes, Ediciones Peninsula 1975

## References

### Books

Daniel Birnbaum, *Chronology*, Sternberg Press 2007

Daniel Birnbaum, Amanda Sharp, Jörg Heiser, *Doug Aitken*, Phaidon 2001

Doug Aitken, *Broken Screen*, Distributed Arts Publishers, Inc 2006

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam, University of Minnesota Press 1997

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Robert Galeta, University of Minnesota Press 1997

Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux Journal Sternberg Press 2012

Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ, *Stan Douglas – Past Imperfect. Works 1986-2007*, Hatje Cantz Verlag 2008

Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Trans. Sheila Glaser, University of Michigan Press, 1994

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Fenomenología de la percepción*, Trans. Jem Gabanes, Ediciones Peninsula 1975

Magnus Bærtås, *You Told Me*, ArtMonitor 2010

Miwon Kwon, *One place after another. Site specific art and locational identity*, The MIT Press 2002

Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Canongate 2006

Scott MacKenzie, *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*, University of California Press 2014

Scott Watson, Diana Thater Carol J. Clover, *Stan Douglas*, Phaidon 1998

Umberto Eco, *Apocalípticos e integrados*, Lumen 1985

### Essays / Articles

Carmen Pardo Salgado. El Poder de la Música. La Música del Poder, in *La música més enllà del comerç*, Indigestió Musical SL 2008

Gilles Deleuze, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, in *October*, Vol. 59, The MIT Press 1992

Hito Steyerl in conversation with Marvin Jordan, Politics of Post-Representation, in *Dis Magazine* 2013 <http://dismagazine.com/disillusioned-2/62143/hito-steyerl-politics-of-post-representation/>

Hito Steyerl, *The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation*, in Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux Journal Sternberg Press 2012

Hito Steyerl, *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*, in Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux Journal Sternberg Press 2012

Jill Godmilow in conversation with Ann-Louise Shapiro, *How Real is the Reality in Documentary Film*, Wesleyan University 2002

Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, *Oxford Journals*, 1975

Miriam Hansen, *The Hieroglyph and the Whore: D.W. Griffith's Intolerance* in Jane Gaines, *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The paradigm Wars*, Duke University Press 1992

Peter Greenaway, *¿A quién corresponde la enseñanza de los medios?*, in Roberto Aparici, *La revolución de los medios audiovisuales*. Ediciones de la Torre 1993 p. 33-43

Steve Rose, *The Isis propaganda war: a hi-tech media jihad*, *The Guardian* 2014  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/07/isis-media-machine-propaganda-war>

Stephan Pascher, *Images of the world a brief introduction*, in *Merge magazine* #16, 2006

Susan Sontag, *Fascinating Fascism*, in *The New York Review of Books* 1975

## Appendix 1

### Round table transcription: "Perception on Urban Transformation"

As part of the site specific at the *Köttinspektionen* project I put together a round table with two experts in the central topic and one artist that shares the interest for the possibilities of the non linear audiovisual projects. The event was celebrated in the same space of the *Om Jag var där* piece, few days after the opening , specifically on Wednesday 13/1/16. The discussions panel was named: "Perception on Urban Transformation", and the participants were: Katrin Helena Jonsdottir Icelandic artist focused on audiovisual art, Jennifer Mack researcher at KTH School of Architecture and Irene Molina Professor in Human Geography at Uppsala University's Institute for Housing and Urban Research. The participants had the chance to observe the installation with the aim of using it as a starting point and talk about the perception of urban spaces in which the transformation of the city of Uppsala is happening.

The event last one hour an a half, the transcription presented here correspond to the first hour of the event.

**Agustin:** Thank you so much for coming, I really appreciate you are coming in a cold windy day. I also wanted to thank to our guests tonight. I actually don't know them so well. I know Katrin from Konstfack, but with Irene and Jennifer I just met them today. But we have a common friend and this is why we are together tonight. I'd like to introduce them.

Jennifer Mack, original from the States, lived here in Sweden for 15 years....

**Jennifer:** I would say eight years.

**Agustin:** Eight years! You've been back and forth.

**Jennifer:** Yes, but I moved here fifteen years ago.

**Agustin:** I'd like you to say few words about your work since it is very extend and comprehends many different places. What can you say that it is good for us to know?

**Jennifer:** Well, basically I studied to be a professional Architect and Urban Planner. But I became very interested in a sort of intersection between the social and the spatial. So Decided to do a research degree and a Phd in Architecture Urbanism and Anthropology, so I am trying to use ethnographic methods to research the urban environment. Mainly focusing on issues of immigration, and the way that immigration and the physical city develop together. So I've been looking at how architects experience mosques and churches for instance, and I did a long project in Södertälje about the Assyrian-Syriac group and how they've changed the cities since the 1960's.

**Agustin:** Nice, thank you so much. And thank you so much for coming.

**Jennifer:** Thank you for inviting me.

**Agustin:** Now we move to Irene Molina. We speak the same language, Spanish.

**Irene:** You pronounce my name perfectly!

**Agustín:** Thanks! As I said, I don't know you so much but I went once to one of your lectures at Konstfack called: Reading Space with intersectional eyes focused on constructions that create social inequality and injustice. Irene is originally from Chile, but you've been more than 30 years living in Uppsala, we were talking about that before so you feel Uppsala already as your hometown. Please, let us know some more about you.

**Irene:** I can start with that! It was just 10 minutes ago when we talked that I started to think that I actually feel that Uppsala is my hometown. I never reflected on that but when I think on it I realize Uppsala is the only hometown I can think about. I am a lover of cities and I've been working with the social geography of the cities for many years, since the 70's actually, first in Latin America and then when I moved to Sweden as a political refugee in 1986. Then, after a while I started to study Swedish cities, in particular the processes of residential segregation and the processes that leads cities to unequal development and to the creation of social and even racial gaps in which there are privilege groups living in some parts of the cities and, the ones I would say unprivileged groups, occupying other parts of the cities. And in Sweden actually the processes have been intensified much much during the last 25, 30 years. That is what I am working with from quite many different perspectives, so also I've been studying some theoretical concepts that have been imported into Swedish reality, which are for instance the concept of racialization , which is the development of racial segregation to a level of separation that one can speak , instead of a segregated city, of a racialized city. And another concept that I am still working a lot is intersectionality, which is kind of an instrument for us researchers to put things together, when we know for instance that class segregation or socio-economic segregation is not operation alone, isolated , but actually in very close relation with gender oppression and or racial discrimination and segregation. Then when you get the necessity of trying to say something about this power relations that conform this structures of uneven power relations, you get a lot of help from this intersectional perspective, so I've been trying to develop it into the Swedish reality.

**Agustín:** As I said your field is very broad. You've been working for Uppsala University, right?

**Irene:** Yes this is true.

**Agustín:** I can't wait to hear more thoughts from you. Thank you for coming.

**Irene:** Thank you for inviting me it is nice to come from the academia to the art scene, it is really a challenge.

**Agustín:** Yes, kind of unexpected, let's see what happen. Also welcome to Katrin Helena Jonsdottir. Original from Iceland. She is the youngest of us and a student like me at Konstfack. I invited her because she is really my art-sister, we share a lot of interests. But also I thought it was so interesting she is from Iceland, we can develop that part later. Can you say something about you?

**Katrin:** Yes, I am in my third year in my bachelor of Fine Arts, and I made this exchange semester in Konstfack, I am just living home in two days now. I am finishing writing my thesis, I am mostly focusing on our perception of time and space, and story telling or narration in video art. And how it can create chaos and how to break the linearity of time and space in narration. This is what Agustín and me were talking a lot about.

**Agustín:** I'd like to catch up with that to introduce the central piece that we have now in front of us, I'd like to describe it just in case someone is new and couldn't see the piece before.

What you can see in this projection is actually the result of two different projections, two movies actually. And this is actually an experiment made with the same spirit of inviting you here today, in order to share a talk and see what happen.

Some short story about me. I've been trained as a filmmaker and before I've made my bachelors in Fine Arts in Barcelona. In all this time I've never thought that it was about to end up in Uppsala. The first time I read this name was in Stieg Larsson Millennium novels. But then end up almost five years living in this city. Also working in the city as an Art Teacher in a secondary school. I was lucky to arrive in her and get a job in this new school that is placed in another place in transformation, (IESU is placed in a old University building that is now dedicated to other uses. There is a plan to urbanize all the surroundings of this area that are now just fields and forests) that experience had an impact in my perception of the place. Later I got to know the place we are now , "Köttinspektionen" that literally means: meat inspection. So, I'd like to go back later to the particular story of this place, since it is the starting point of the artwork. When I came in here to see an exhibition for the first time, one organized by Haka (the artist collective that manages the place) I found it out a fascinating place and then I was triggered to know the neighborhood. I kind of knew that this was an industrial place and since I like this kind of abandoned spaces very much I was really curious. Then I found out that this was really the starting point.

Well, then I am guy from Spain living in Uppsala, but let me tell you something about my experience. In 2008, the Lehman Brothers crash was affecting the whole world. Some countries got it worst than others. For example Iceland, right? At that time Spain was developing a huge housing bubble that it was in its growing peak giving the impression that it was great until it crashed. So, probably because that I am here now. Because in 2009 it was really hard to get a job in the TV industry when I was working at that time. Actually I had to look for another kind of temporary job. It was hard for me. That experience had a very strong impact in my way of thinking. In a way, everyday I go I take that with me.

Going back to Uppsala, I thought it was interesting to make a project that had something to do with the city I moved into. So what I've done was to take a film camera and a tripod and I went around the city with my bike some days during the month of August 2015. I stopped intuitively in some places that triggered my attention. I didn't make a specific planning, I didn't go to places I knew that were abandoned or gentrified, I was just exploring. That was an interesting experiment because at that time I didn't know Uppsala so well. Then I found this new places for me, I set up the tripod and the camera and I took one minute fixed-frame film of every place, with the result of one hour movie. What for me was some sort of a portrait of the city. But a very peculiar portrait of the city.

Then what I've done is this. I invited a group of young Actors to a screening of the movie. They are all originally from Uppsala and based in the city. The screening was placed in here, the same place you are observing now the art work, and actually I used the same background that I am using now to screen the whole installation. Then I asked them just to watch the movie for one hour and meanwhile I was filming them, so what you see now is the actors watching the original movie and, at the same time in an overlap, the screening of the original movie, the ones they were observing. This is what you are seeing two different projections juxtaposed, but, also important to know, this projections are not synchronized. Because each of them has a different length, you are always going to see a different juxtaposition. In a way it is like watching a new movie every time.

When I saw the original movie to the Actors they asked me for what they should do, and I just told them that I wanted them to watch the movie and do what ever they wanted. This is why they go in an out, sometimes they just observed, sometimes they just react to the images or talk and play among them. It is interesting, because I never told them why I made this portrait of the city. But I really always have an idea in my head. I wanted to

depict spaces that were in transition towards something else. I can tell you more of the background of my ideas, I really think that the urban planning of the city is not moving towards an interesting place. Under my point of view it is approaching to a neoliberal model where the social rental housing system is diminished and owning an apartment is a trend. And that means a lot for a society. But then again, I didn't want to tell them about this, I just wanted them to see the movie. And later I made them an interview where they had the chance to talk about their experience during the screening. They talked about their city, they talked about the images of my perception of the city, triggering some questions. In fact that experiment is just a reflexion of something that happens very often, we all have to negotiate all the time with perception. In this case they were wondering why I made this movie, why I use this perception. In a way, without perceiving the real intention.

In general I think audiovisual is very powerful, it has a strong influence in us. So, you see this two films running at the same time in a unsynchronized way, so what you see it is an unique coincidence (even though if we make the maths eventually we should be able to see a coincidence for a second time, probably it would take long time before that occurs). Also, the interview that is running as a sound background has also a different length, so that puts a third element in the equation, the result is a very personalized experience for every viewer. My intention with this setting is to open this audiovisual piece (actually with the classic elements of a documentary) to randomness, hoping that this action helps also to broaden up the perception of the work. I am also hoping then that the piece pushes you to position yourself, helps you to find your own point of view. But the only thing I want really is to make you think: ok, where I am? Who I am in relation to this images? What ideas I have about the images? I hope we can talk about that later.

20'

As I said Uppsala has been through a big transformation lately. When I came here in 2011 there wasn't so much building going on. I was told that in 2008 a lot of construction sites were stopped, but now you can see them popping out again strongly. Going back to this building we are now, "Köttinspektionen", it was builded in 1930, it is now a catalogued building because Anders Diös, a prestigious Swedish Architect, projected and made it. The building now belongs to Uppsala municipality and it is managed by the Artist collective Haka, but also by a Theater Group and a Dance Company. Now if you go around this neighborhood you can see a lot of cranes, a lot of constructions sites in progress and a lot a new expensive apartment buildings. But also there is a lack of social housing around the new emerging area. Then after seeing this situation I wonder if we are witnessing another example of gentrification, like the ones in progress in many cities of the world. This is why "Köttinspektionen" as a building inserted in this context is interesting for me.

Any questions?

**Audience:** This neighborhood got its first habitants actually not so long ago, I think the first ones came just 6 months ago.

**Agustín:** Yes, it seems that this has been like that. Actually some of the audience that came already to see the exhibition told me that they just moved in the neighborhood and they didn't know what was this building for and they realized that they have sort a cultural center next door. So I would say that they already feel that this old industrial building was out of place but somehow it is getting integrated. In my opinion all is getting part of the gentrification process, regardless you want it or not.

Well, now if you want we can start to talk about some topics. The first one I'd like to bring over the table is: How we perceived the urban transformation? For me it is fascinating to realize how the young people I invited to watch the film didn't made some of the observations that were obvious to my eyes. In fact some of them were questioning if that was Uppsala or not. In general they didn't have the perception that the urban planning

could get into trouble in the near future. So what do you think of the transformation of the city and its perception?

**Katrin:** If I connect it to Iceland, specially in the last eight years since we had the crisis after the housing bubble crashed, we had a lot of empty spaces around the capital. We had suburban abandoned spaces where ghost town were raising, the population was growing very rapidly, they had a need of houses, they ask for a loans but the banks declared bankruptcy, so people couldn't pay off their loans, they couldn't move into their apartments so we have now huge neighborhoods with empty houses, empty streets even with the names on it, everything was ready except there was no people. And then the shift itself was very interesting, we had an american professor that came to Iceland just a couple of months before the crisis bursted. He said in an interview that the country was about to suffer an economical crisis really soon, but everybody was like: what? We have a bright prosper future ahead of us! People got angry at him for saying this. But he said, look around in the capital, there is so many construction cranes, and so many construction sites in a small society is just a bad sign. So people got mad, wouldn't believe him but 2 months later the crisis came. So we got this really weird city full of this construction cranes, full of empty groundworks for buildings and even holes, so people started to talk of this as the wounds of the capital, the wounds of the city landscapes. And for me, because you talk about the young people not noticing this places in a way, I had to actually go on line to see how this places look like in Reykjavik for the last eight years, because I just look to the other side when it comes to see places that I don't like. Then I think that it is very interesting to put this places in a pedestal the way you do it. And directing out viewpoint to those empty spaces that we don't take in usually, that we just neglect.

**Agustin:** Yes, totally agree. Also I'd like to hear from your experience (to Jennifer). You are originally from Detroit, in the United States, where there is now a big process of gentrification. I know an artist from there who told me that it is great chance for artist now to move into the old industrial areas and get a big cheap studio there. And so, what can you say about Uppsala or Stockholm, about a certain perception of this process in the cities. Also of the shift of a model.

**Jennifer:** Well, I think that what you pointed out is really very interesting in terms of how certain generation perhaps don't even perceive it as a break, I mean, I think this is really fascinating example of how we think about gentrification. I fell I witnessed different processes of gentrification in a lot of different places that I either visited or lived. You mentioned Detroit, I am actually from Toledo, Ohio, in a sense a suburb of Detroit, it is about an hour away. There is an attempt of gentrification going on in Toledo. But Toledo is some kind of second city in a way, it doesn't have the same profile as Detroit that had so many problems and have been in such focused for all different kinds of reasons like housing foreclosures and now urban farming. But now I think i Toledo if it's a "Detroit" model that has been used it is not going well at all, it is also very interesting to see the attempt of reflect and mirror the things that people has seen. Another thing that you pointed out is when there is something, like this economic break that it puts a stop to the projects that are on going, which I saw very clearly in a trip in the late 1990's to Japan. Where we were in different cities around the country, I was with a group of architects. it was so interesting to hear about how there were all these plans for things like highways that were about to go through the middle of some historic villages that were put on hold because the economic crisis. And then one wonders what happens when a country does recover and this projects begin again, you know, those projects picking up in the same exact form or what exactly happens.

**Agustin:** You are right, for example Spain you can see that the stop is severe, we are not really recovering, There is some news about a shy improvement but this process is always different in all countries with economical crisis.

**Jennifer:** Yes, I was actually reading a bit about Spain and there were even ghost airports, not just ghost towns, with the infrastructure that was developed for.

**Agustín:** Yes, and abandoned paying highways because nobody wants to use them since there is a free alternative for them.

So, Irene, you are the most veteran of us living in Uppsala, how did you observe the shift and changes in the city.

**Irene:** Yes, besides my experience living in here I have been studying Uppsala as a subject I have to say...

(Irene introduces his field of study but we have lost this part of the audio due to a recording technical problem)

...of this quite cruel and sometimes brutal economic system of capitalism and in particular neoliberalism. And we insist on, as people, as human beings, we insist on making something different with the space of the city. We insist on not seeing the city as an economic object, we want to experience things, we want to develop ourselves, we want to have our love affairs or whatever in the city, with the city, but there are very strong forces that can react on that all the time. And I think that I started to feel bodily, in particular with my experience in Uppsala, I think, because, a part from this processes that you talk and that illustrate very well, about the city growing and eating up spaces that were suppose to be something else with buildings and new constructions. So, apart from that process, there is a process of renovation of the old housing stock in Uppsala, which I would say, unfortunately, that will be the trend in the whole country, it has gone brutal in Uppsala. I mean, we have already a lot of examples of areas in Uppsala like Gränby for instance in which people got brutally faced by the fact that what they thought of their homes wasn't real anymore, all of a sudden it was the property of those who owned the land of the areas that wanted to make changes in order to make profit with it. So people who have been living for instance in Gränby for their whole life have to leave the areas. At IBF we are researching a lot about this issue of gentrification in Uppsala and we are starting to talk about "renoviction" to try to illustrate this process of renovation with eviction. Not everybody have to leave their areas, of course, we don't know exactly since there are not good statistics on that, but we think it is about the fourth of the population, 25% have to leave the areas in which they lived for many many years.

**Agustín:** For economic reasons.

Irene, Yes, for economic reasons. They can not afford to pay the new rent which can be 50, 60, 70 percent higher than they had before. We have been observing this in ethnographic studies and registering interviews of the people in this situation so you get very touched by the narratives of these people telling you that: -Well, I don't know what I am going to do now! I am completely lost. Lost in space, lost in time. I don't know what to do because this has been my home for my whole life.- Mainly elderly people are really suffering from this cruel, kind of raw way of conceiving of the city space.

**Agustín:** You are touching base with the people, with the population, your work is so much with them. Do they know why?

**Irene:** Actually yes. What it is happening now, I think it is a good thing among the whole horrible situation, is that people are more and more aware because they are coming together, building organizations and mobilizing on the issue of gentrification, which it is something completely new in Sweden, not gentrification, gentrification is not new, but since it hasn't operated in such a brutal way before it didn't create any kind of mobilization. Before it was some kind of abstract knowledge about what gentrification was and one could said,

well this is typical in Stockholm, yes, that has been gentrified for a lot of years, but when it started to touch people lives and creating a lot of tragedies in the private level then people got very much engaged and preoccupied and started to mobilize, so now are popping up a lot of organizations in the country and Uppsala as well.

**Agustín:** So positive to raise awareness, right?

**Irene:** Yes, awareness is increasing a lot and that is a good news but the bad news is that the capacity of changing the course of events is really minimum, there is almost no possibility because, the whole system is organized in that way today, and that has happened very quickly in the history of Swedish housing policy. We have now an almost completely privatized housing market where the housing policy is reduced to the minimum today, as public policy I mean. The capacity of the state and the municipalities to counteract these marketizing trends are very small and even smaller for the people.

**Agustín:** Katrin and I can tell in first person what happen to a population when we face a crisis like the one we got, how big it is. Almost everybody knows somebody that has been into trouble because the crisis. In Spain it is like that and probably in Iceland, were there are a small population, right? Everybody knows everybody. Katrin, what can you tell about this experience?

**Katrin:** I was lucky back then, I was living with my parents at that time. They can consider themselves as part of the middle class. They always have been really practical with loans and similar things , so they got out of the crisis pretty well. My friends were in a similar situation so I don't know really anyone that have been evicted, but I can tell how that crisis change the whole society. For example, in the media it was all about people being evicted, or that could afford food for their kids or medical health, so the conversations in society changed a lot. And now I can relate with what you are talking about (Irene) of people being evicted for economical reasons. My Grandmother has been living in downtown Reykjavik, since...well, since I was born I remember her living in this apartment building that is really central. Then now the building has been sold and she needs to move out of there after all this long time living there, she needs to find another place within a year, she just have lost her husband, so she is by herself now. It is very weird. She doesn't know what it is going to happen to the building. We believe it is going to be for tourism. This is normally the economical change now in the city since there are so many tourists. So I can see that the priorities are not exactly for the people living there for long time, so I don't really get how they make this priorities in the city.

**Agustín:** This is what we were talking before, how we tend to forget after the economies are recovering. This is what you were mentioning before (Irene) how the organizations that raise awareness about what the implementation of a model means for the population. Maybe Jennifer, you can comment on this. Coming from a different country you can tell how the people react on this issues.

**Jennifer:** There is a couple of things I was thinking when you were talking before (Irene). About a radio documentary I heard about, that was excellent, from a Swedish radio, about Sasko in Södertälje. And how, there were a lot of people that were actually coming from Finland, and they were part of this neighborhood, they have been living there for a number of years, and then there was a similar plan of "renoviction" process where people were ask to move out temporarily meanwhile they were renovating but then they couldn't afford the rents when they move back in. So in the documentary they talk very clearly about how this was a very intentional process and then people were not suppose to move back in, that was actually the point. And there was a lot of accusation on them, that for instance a lot of people were alcoholics, that they were not the type of tenants you want. That was a sort of way of creating a new neighborhood that ultimately was not so successful. That very much done through that process. And I think it is interesting to think about that the fact that they

were immigrants from Finland who were in it, perhaps were in a more vulnerable position, and much like the pensioners that you were talking about. And I was thinking also about in my own experience living in the United States. I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1995, and that was the same year as the rent control was done away with in Cambridge Massachusetts.

**Agustín:** They stopped it.

**Jennifer:** Yes, and there was a lot of discussion about what would have happened, and it was actually very interesting that there was one, they called them squares but there was actually an intersection, at Central Square, where there was a large project to build a, what it supposed to be a mixed income housing structure right in the center, and of course the land that was on had this historical Doughnut shop and another of all this well-known institutions, commercial and otherwise, and a lot of elderly people living in a housing complex nearby that were forced to move. But I was thinking about, how, first of all, there is this attempts to do things that appear to be responding to public demands or responding to complains. In that case it was a proposal for a very high structure and a certain level of mix income housing. And in the process of this, this debate actually lowered the level of stories and they include more mixed of income housing, but there was a kind of understanding that in fact those have been their goals all along, so they presented this wild, out of proportion building from the beginning to have something to work against. And I remember thinking about, you know, how people are trying to protest. So people also protested when a GAP and Starbucks wanted to move into the same place where this long standing shop were, so people protesting in lines outside the Starbucks to say that they didn't want that one there and later, you know, you go there today and people are seating in the Starbucks (laughter) totally functioning, no evidence!

**Agustín:** No track of memory.

**Jennifer:** No, so it is very interesting to see this kind of strategies.

**Agustín:** It is true. I don't know if you are familiar with this. What happen in Barcelona with a group called PAH (Platform for the Mortgage Affected) A group that became very popular and effective, still is actually, that are fighting for the ones that lost their home because abusive mortgage policies. In Spain if you can not pay for the mortgage the bank takes the apartment but you keep the unpaid part of the mortgage, so that is still legal. What it is actually pushing people out of the system forever, impossible to get into a good situation to pay the debt back when you don't even have a place to live. So this protesting platform and helping association became really popular, everybody was talking about it. So, one of the leaders of PAH got actually very popular as well when she was able to speak about this problematic on the parliament, she actually did a great job in there. But that was the beginning of her political career. Now she is the major of the city of Barcelona, what it is a great achievement and give us hope, but all of a sudden now the PAH is asking her to make real the promises she made. Whether this is possible or not, we'll see it in the years coming, but I have the feeling that she has been absorbed by the system in a record time. I hope I am wrong though.

**Agustín:** I also wanted to talk about the impact of media in all this issues. I put this project in a big screen because I wanted its dimension to have an impact in the audience. I am coming from this generation that are crazy about getting the new Star Wars movie because you grew up with that. So movies and media are so important for us. Anyway, I'd like t make a last round with few words on what is your perception on the role of media in tis issues we are talking, specially concerning about the urban planning on. We can start with you Katrin.

**Katrin:** When you use the camera in an audiovisual you are able to control the point of view of the audience. So for instance you could create a huge city out of a small village if you want to. You could stretched it with your imagination as much as you want basically. So I think the medium is something that allows us to make reality, in this case boring spaces or empty ones, something that is really magical and interesting.

**Agustin:** You can create a myth.

**Katrin:** Yes, exactly. In a way it can work as a mirror but a mirror that can be magical and mystical. Because we are looking to the reality, but you as an artist with your camera can change our perspective of what we are seeing. And we can create what we want, we can make our imagination real through the medium, and I think this is what it is strong about using video to explain thoughts or explain perceptions.

**Irene:** I think the problem with media or this technological way of using media now has a bigger impact than other images before, but even when we think of photographs, for instance, as images, the role of the media using images, like photographs, together with narrative, with text, has been a huge actor mediating our perceptions of the city in the case of the Swedish Million Program (Miljonprogrammet). I have been in contact with research on that so the power of the representation of what the Million Program have been, has been really important of what we call in research the mental map of the city, that has been created for us and we have consumed it from the media, in a way that, for instance in Sweden, we live here in Uppsala but we know exactly when we hear somebody talking about Rosengård in Malmö: –Oh yes, we know exactly what Rosengård is!– We don't need to have been put a foot on that place because we know exactly what it is about. Because it has been so strongly mediated by the Media. So Media have been created those images of the good places, the bad places, this concept of the territorial stigmatization that is the representation of places as dangerous, non Swedish, criminal places,. It is very much the responsibility of that media. So in that power that you were (to Katrin) talking about, there is a so important aspect of responsibility, ethics. Kind of taking care of the power of the possibilities of the representation of creating spaces, but also creating everyday life for the people, for instance I put a lot of responsibility of the violence that we are witnessing in some of these Million Program areas and in other places of the cities as well, in the role of the Media. Because they have been invading us with all these images of the criminal, the dangerous parts of the city that today. For instance the presence of the police in these areas compared to how it was in the 70's or 80's it is kind of process of militarization of the state, if you look what kind of attitude and equipment and the way in which the police approach these areas.

**Agustin:** It seems that their presence is kind of well designed to create a reaction in the population.

**Irene:** That's true. So the I really long for the Media taking responsibility.

**Jennifer:** I looked to the representation of Södertälje specially in the media and one of the things I am also stroked by is not just the images, which are often these militarized images of police barriers or people in riot gear during some specific and short term events. I lived in Ronna for instance myself for a long time and before I moved there a lot of people who were telling me, even some people who have lived there before: –Oh you can't move there! – Because there is this perception that it is so dangerous, but what I was going to say is that it is not just the images but also some sort of metaphors that revolve around this places like: –Oh, it is little Bagdad, like that suppose to mean something terrible. Or like: – Ronna is like Texas, people told me. Just to be a short hand for, you know, this is not a place you want to live. And I wish I could remember the name of the artists, there were two students from Konstfack, who did a project were they took these beautiful bucolic images almost a post card images of Million Program areas where they were actually... I think this was in Tensta, they were living there. And try to represent it as this beautiful and natural environment where you see

lakes and you see the sun setting and all these beautiful things that you associate with other areas and create postcards out of these. I thought this was such a brilliant way of trying to re-think the perceptions and the representations of a place, because those are equally valid images. It is actually disturbing how very small and specific things that happen end up becoming the entire image of a place.

**Agustín:** This is fascinating. for me as a foreigner living in Uppsala for few years i have some visitors from Spain sometimes, and almost all asked me why all the apartment houses are so similar in Sweden, then I tell them about the Million Program and that sounds like a paradise for a Spaniard. In my country situation it would be amazing if we had something like that. And this is what the PAH association are fighting for, to release all the empty houses (around 300.000) that the banks are holding to speculate with them, and do it in favor of the people who needs it in a form of social stable renting regime. The banks probably won't do that if the government doesn't change. So I found so interesting this perception because Sweden is in a totally different chapter of the process, that somehow there is a parallelism between those two situations.

Just the last question before we open the discussion for questions. Do you think that Uppsala is some sort of a Guinea Pig of gentrification and some sort of a test of a change towards a more neoliberal economical model?

**Jennifer:** I see parallel processes happening in Stockholm where I live, and talking about Media representation of you think about the images that I received weekly from real state agents in my mailbox where they show an image of an apartment that they recently sold and the price per square meter, a mean, we get them and we never subscribed to them, we just get it from different real state agents all the time...then you understand that there is a process going on, and the higher the price per square meter they can tell you that they sold for the better obviously from their point of view and from the prospective sellers point of view. So I don't know if Uppsala is Guinea Pig because I think it is happening everywhere in Sweden right now. So it is more like a parallel process and definitely I think Stockholm is affected greatly. And we where talking about Liljeholmskajen on the way here, this is another place where I looked at apartments. It is very interesting to see these areas that are being constructed for this new high pressure housing market where I am not sure the quality of life it is actually that great in the end, because you end up with this non unlike the Million Program, very very similar kind of living situations where everyone has a looking plan, and you are looking directly into a neighbor's apartment across the street because it is a little bit to close....

**Irene:** I think that this phenomena of the very quick growing city comes much more from the big cities and in particular from Stockholm in the first place, it came later on to Uppsala, and I was very sad when the process started in Uppsala and in the way in which it did. What I say is that in Uppsala is not the first and it is not the most exemplar in many senses but it has been the most brutal. I mean more than in Stockholm, more than in Malmö and more than in Gothenburg. What I mean is that is not proportional to the size of the city, because if it is still true that the city is growing faster we are still a middle size, rather smaller than bigger city, I mean we are approaching the hundred thousand people in the city, the municipality has more than that but the city is still a manageable one, you can bike around the city, you can cross it by bike, you can barely do that in Stockholm or even in Malmö, so I think that what it has been happening the last years in Uppsala is not proportional.

## Appendix 2

### Transcription of a 30' interview to a young group of actors based in Uppsala.

This is an english translation of the interview presented in the video installation *Om Jag var där* in a form of an 30' audio file. The audience could listen this elocution in the room at the same time that it was listening the background noise of the "Uppsala Spaces", my personal portrait of the city. The sound tracks were merging but were not synchronized so the coincidences ran in a random way.

A: Agustín

M: One of the 2 men participating

W: One of the 4 women participating.

A: We are recording now...

So, how did you feel about that?

M: It was fun. It was ... it was interesting how one became more and more, what is it called, relaxed in everything, that it was just like, there was a natural flow. But, it went from sitting down quietly and just observing, floated along with the image, to feeling more playful towards the end. Getting inspired to do things yourself.

W: And it became more and more like, or there were moments where I was not aware of the camera at all and at times I wasn't even thinking about whether I was in the picture or outside.

W: I felt much more like I wanted to go into the image and do things in these environments, much more so than when you experience places in reality, so in a way, just because it was a picture of it. So it was like, had it been there for real then I wouldn't had wanted to do it. I wanted to sit in my chair and run around in the places, like the water tower, but I wouldn't if I actually walked past it.

W: Exactly, that chair had probably been totally disgusting and moldy.

W: And then one would had thought like, oh no, this grass is full of insects and ticks.

W: That I thought of actually. The ticks.

M: I was fascinated by all the memories that were triggered by the pictures that had nothing to do with the pictures but still they appeared. There were very many childhood memories. Felt like going to a psychologist. It was really cool.

M: But now that you mention it, about children and play, I mean, there's really a difference. When you see these images, you see the water tower, you see these balconies that are not done but just stick out of the buildings, when you're there for real then you might walk past and not take much notice, but when you watch the images it makes you think about what you would had done as a child, how you would play in the fields. One would run across them, and the water tower, one would play hide and seek or other games you could do there, or sit on those balconies and dangle your legs or ...

W: That it was like you started to think about being a child.

W: I also felt a lot like that but it was also a bit of, like, here are places, do what you want. That's not what it's like any more. But when you were little, I played a lot using my imagination and so, and how one used different places and so on, when it was like, here is an empty space, do something! Then it becomes a lot like, I felt like a child.

W: I thought it was ... some pictures caught my attention more.. Others I just looked at and swishing past them while thinking about something else. However, some pictures really caught me and like, I dared to study it closer. Like what is this. Some pictures, I couldn't even tell what they were showing.

W: No

M: Some I wished they wouldn't disappear. Wanted to watch them for longer.

W: Me too, very much.

W: Well, I thought a lot about those photos that ended up towards the end, the ones that were upside down. And it was this disgusting sound all the time. Did you notice that?

M: Yes

W: Yes

W: Which accompanied all the images like

W: I thought it was difficult that they were upside down, it bothered me a lot.

M: But it was interesting what happened to us then. It felt like there was a lot more energy. And the more of an exploration of the space and of what we saw because of this sudden upside down.

W: Yes, but it was pretty extreme that we tried to relate to images that were upside down and we were like: must adapt. I mean, you started bleeding because you were making such an effort to adjust.

A: What do you think my intention was? Why do you think I chose these images?  
Something about that?

W: I think ... or I believe that when you do it this way and highlight these places, then you experience... This sounds so cliché, but you open your eyes to nice places that you have not thought of before. And although it looks a bit untidy, there can be beauty in that too.

W: One really got to see Uppsala from a different perspective. You walk around here every day and kind of, often you use and sort develop your own hideaways. Felt a bit like you were taken on a journey of discovery, like...this also exists, don't forget about it.

W: I was thinking a lot about, because there were a lot of images from Boländerna and a lot of those kind of pictures like, so I do not know, I recognized a lot of places. And it felt like, yes, I know where this place is. I have been here several times. I've passed by here several times but I've never seen it this way at all.

W: As if one hasn't really seen it.

W: No, exactly. That's what it is like, one can pass the river sometimes, and then suddenly it strikes me, God what a beautiful city we live in.

W: But it's also that you look at places and see them as very empty, I think. Like, I think there was a lot in the pictures that one recognized as empty places or, there is just nothing there somehow. Especially in the shipyard and in Boländerna. And so. It made sense in a way that it was empty there. A lot of it had a strong feeling of loneliness. I got a rather melancholic feel from it.

M: Yes, but they are places where you shouldn't be really. Places that do not have anything to ... yes, places where you think: But where should one be here? Yes, but I'll go over there, there, you should not be at these sites because they are of no interest. Empty. I have nothing to do there.

W: Right

W: That was what was exciting. That's what's exciting that we did a lot of things in places where you do not usually do things, or where it's not meant for you to do things. Or even be. Except for the bike paths, and the like, of course you can bike on those.

M: Yes, exactly, but still, the intention is that you should just pass, you're just bike past it.

W: Yes, exactly, they are there for you to just ride by and not stay. There's no point in being there somehow.

M: Exactly, it was the same when they built the houses: this is not yet finished, you do not need to be here. You are not allowed to be here. You are allowed to be here, I think, in most cases, you are, but as I said, it's strange that you stop and spend time here.

W: That's why it will be strange since later because, or I try imagine if there was some place that is like, this is a place where one should just like to sit down and take chill. Maybe that chair, you know. Maybe one wouldn't actually do that. Then it becomes quite interesting if you add to these places that we are lying down and sitting around and like, do handstands in places that...

W: Lying on the ground and rolling around in the gravel.

W: Yes, kind of like that. But in places that are very ephemeral sort of. Or very still.

A: I know that you were aware of the fact that you were being filmed, so you knew the camera was there. How do you think that influenced your behavior? Would it had been the same without the camera?

M: It's definitely like ... the camera made you, perhaps that depends what kind of person you are, but I know that one becomes aware, sometimes, you get an idea of what the camera sees and that you want to somehow, you get curious about what the camera sees if I stand over here, or if I cross over, or stuff like that. While in some cases one forgets about it. But it is right there, and you are aware that it is constantly filming and doing something to me.

W: Yes, I think I get a little stuck in "back towards the audience" as well. Actually. Since the camera is an eye watching us when we do things and I'm used to you as people I do things with in front of an audience...so...

when I chose to turn my back towards it, I had to make a very conscious decision. To do it. Sometimes. When I didn't actually stop thinking about it, that is was actually there.

W: I think that if we had had the same task, and had removed the camera. If we had done the same thing, I mean. Then I think we would had begun to be improvisers much earlier, you know what I mean? That we might had gone more crazy.

W: We had probably started playing different scenes.

W: We probably would had. We had probably started playing scenes.

W: We would had chosen the places and then we would had begun to play based on those sites.

W: Yes

M: I thought it was quite nice to deviate from this "back to the audience"-rule and just not care about it. Now, maybe half of me is visible or maybe just the upper part over there or, it felt kind of nice to be free to do that. But at the same time it... there were many times where I thought: This will not look good, I will exit here or I turn like this or ....

W: Yes, but sometimes you thought about it, sometimes it vanished completely. But once, when I sat on the floor, I was not thinking about it, then all of a sudden: Right, there is a camera there, God, I'm sitting all huckle-backed. I thought, should I straighten up? But this is how I sit. Then I was so aware.

W: Yes, I was really aware of it or like, one forgets it also as you said, forgets it now and then, I think especially in the beginning, I thought a lot like, ah shit, now I really straighten my back. Or like, you became aware of what you were doing with your body.

W: mmm

M: Especially also when, if it matters whether I'm acting or not acting, because in many cases it felt like now I got an impulse to do something but shit that impulse may not reflect a natural one.

W: I was thinking a lot like that as well. I did get ... it was like when you were pissed that I jumped. that gave me an impulse to jump ... and then I really hurt my feet. Eh ... but, I felt it afterwards also that I questioned myself once whether I was acting but like, I would jumped even if there wasn't a camera there. I would have. I would had jumped much more if there was a camera there, I think. But then it became... that was the time I questioned what I was doing in relation to whether there was a camera there or not. uh ... but as I said I think we would have been much more all over the place because we are that kind of people.

M: Yeah..but also in the beginning, you could also feel a bit of prestige about not being brave enough, prestige about what it is the camera wants to see as well ... what do we want, what are we supposed to do. In the beginning.

W: What is the task?

W: Yes, also that it's a bit like this that we are here and we are doing this now, this is the only time we do it and..it's not like there's going to be any retake.

W: Right.

W: Or that we had the chance to practice before, it is only now and then maybe you get more aware of what the task is and you think through what you should do.

W: mmm

A: Regarding Uppsala. You are from Uppsala and you work and live here and you constitute a theatre group here in Uppsala. And as I said, this is a kind of exercise for me to show an opinion, my personal opinion. That you knew from the beginning. How do you feel about that? How do you feel about watching the other's opinion about your own city, about places you are very familiar with?

W: For the last few years I think that I have felt very happy about living in Uppsala and I have kind of seen Uppsala in some sort like shimmer because it is so beautiful and like, you look at the cathedral and it is nice weather, it is really beautiful. Well I have actually more and more started noticing how littered the streets are sometimes, that is ugly. There are ugly places! There are horribly ugly places in Uppsala.

W: I think it's a bit sad that someone from outside looks at Uppsala this way but when I think about it, yes, there is of course a lot and as has been said they are building everywhere. There is so many construction cranes. But like, it does feel a bit sad somehow.

W: But I think ... .sorry ..

W: Yes, but because, I at least feel like many of the pictures were not so positive. Most of the pictures did not feel so positive for me anyway.

W: It did not think like that. I thought quite the opposite. I thought they were quite romantic. then ... Or I thought they were, the places I thought, ok so maybe it was the parking lots and so, but otherwise like the one with all containers. That one I have looked at myself and taken a lot of photos of before. And I thought it was really nice that someone else had noticed it as well and I got all happy since I was like, Oooh. And many of these places I have never seen before, so it was fun especially down at the shipyard where I have hardly been at all. I thought of one thing and that is the places that are from, the neighborhood where I grew up. Which felt a bit like ah, but, well here I have been, or well ... this is a bit like mine somehow. And yes, I don't know, it felt a bit strange in some way. To see it from the outside.

W: But I recognize that. or when I saw the Lennakatten steam train. I'm like from Lenna. When I saw Lennakatten track I was like: That's mine, they're my tracks!

M: No, I was thinking, something that I can imagine is really differs in our experience as opposed to someone who doesn't have, like, the same experiences of Uppsala, that's what you realize when it was showing from the Word of Life which we have a specific feeling about, that that place used to be just a parking lot, and there was a small building ... so then you start to think: ah parking lot, but that's where it is!

W: Yes, but that's where I got a very strong sense, especially since I have grown up right next to the Word of Life I realized right away that it was the Word of Life and then I immediately became like no! don't be here! I do not want to be here! It's like, I certainly don't relate the Word of Life, not because I grew up right there but I do not link it to anything positive at all.

M: I never thought that the pictures had been chosen because it was good or bad or beautiful or ugly. Only like, image here, so. There were a few places that I thought were nicer than others but I didn't think there was any thought behind it. Now I will show Uppsala from a dirtier aspect or from more of a green perspective, not even that there was something like, this special point of view, but rather that it was such a mix from different places. More like, this is also Uppsala.

W: Since it was, like has been said before, a lot of places that one hadn't seen before. Or at least for me it was. So I could not say like, oh yes this is there.

W: But I think it was a bit mixed if you think about the field. One usually never stands in the middle of a field here. And that was the most extreme in a way of how I saw the pictures. That this is usually not where you stand. And I think that the field was almost the most, where you do not usually stand in any way since it ... it's sort of pretty hard work to get out into the middle of a field. And to me it was a bit like that picture pulled all the other images together.

M: But I thought about the same thing that we see the water tower all the time when passing by, when you drive by it or like there is the water tower, there is the water tower. But one never sees the water tower from below. You don't ever think. One knows that there is a bottom to the water tower but you do not make the effort to see it from that perspective since it is quite far to go there and so. and you don't know when one would have a reason to walk underneath the water tower. Rather, now I'll go underneath the water tower.

W: But I'm also thinking that it can be partly about a questioning of what is beautiful in a way. Because if you think about touristy pictures from whatever city you always select certain places. Like, this is what we want to show of our city. But it is not necessarily what we think is beautiful about the beauty. Somehow. I found that many of these pictures were very beautiful though it was perhaps a very industrial building. Sort of.

M: I found it interesting what you said before about that this road you should walk past. You should not linger here. And what Agustin said about that people had looked at him in a strange way.

W: Exactly! I also thought about that!

M: Yes, but this thing that, this thought I was pretty so I will stop and hang out here or this was ugly or whatever it was. Here I will stop and observe, and people were just like but you can't stand here, you are just supposed to walk past this.

M: Yes exactly. Over there there is a nice hill that you can shoot instead.

W: Yes exactly, it is so everyday. It has become familiar so maybe you don't stop and look and check out what is pretty about the familiar because you have seen it so much.

W: But I think that in some way it never was meant for you to be there and look or stop, or that it barely is. Like this footbridge or the bike path. That which is under the bridge is only there for making you pass through there. It has no purpose except that you should make your way from there and to there. Over here is the purpose. This is just the transport distance between the purposes in a way.

A: And this will probably be the last question, but before I filmed you, recorded your bodies. and now I record your voice, right? So, I would like you to reflect a bit around that. How do you feel, for example, now that I

record your voice and your voice will be displayed just like your image, but separately? How does it feel when someone is shooting you or when someone is recording your voice? How do you feel? Is there any difference?

W: I think that it feels like ... to take pictures or film the body and so, that doesn't feel ... it feels much easier. People see me and my body on the street every day anyway. But my voice, that's sort of my thoughts. That feels more personal. And even if I say something here, that doesn't mean that I always think that way but I don't know, it feels, the voice feels more personal than the body.

M: I agree. I agree. I think that when you take something you say, something that is voiced right now then I am accountable for it later as well, if you can't add anything other than what I say. Possibly how I say it. but it will become like that everything I say is important and true for me right now, like you say, that I may not think like this usually. Maybe I said it wrong. I might not have had all the facts. I think it's really bothering and sometimes maybe you are just quiet and want to show it physically instead, because I think it is much easier to be accountable for your physical appearance, because it is, it might be because people see it more. You are less afraid of making mistakes with your body.

W: I think, actually, I think, when we are sitting here talking, I think less about that we record than when filming. So in that way I am more aware that we are filmed than that we will be recorded. But at the same time I think it would have been a different thing if we had recorded the voice and video simultaneously. Because then it will be like, then the voice gets connected to the body. So, when we will come and watch this, we will of course know who is who, but people who are outsiders who do not know us they won't be able to connect voice and body.

M: mmm

W: So in that way...I mean, they might think that my voice belongs to Sandra's ... body when they watch the film. So I think that must be the most vulnerable position. To be recorded with both body and voice simultaneously.

W: I think it feels a little scary that, especially precisely because they are separated. To take, to place me into something. And I am not there when it happens somehow. Because if I would, if it had been the shooting of a movie with sound and image then I have a different kind of, now I am being dismantled in any way and placed here and that feels a little scarier. That it feels like, I don't know, it feels like I'm not quite there or something. Like, it is not our ...

W: Not being in control in the same way

W: No, and I'm a bit like, as if someone has taken parts of me, no, I don't know. It's like...

M: For me it's a bit like what, what I think works best. I also feel a bit more comfortable showing my body. But mostly because it kind of, it does what I want it to do while when I speak, it becomes hmmm blue like this. The mouth doesn't quite do what I want it to do. And might not find the right words all the time also. But the body just kind of functions.

W: I am the opposite, actually.

W: I agree with you Martin. I also feel much more comfortable filming body. It feels like it is just doing! The mouth one has to, like you have to formulate things and one must collect ones thoughts and stuff. The body just does!

W: We are opposites!

M: It's crazy how much it is like, how much I think of what other people perceive. If I have a cold, I love my cold voice. Then I want everyone to hear me speak, but it probably just sounds like this .... So it's very much just perceptions of what others, about what they see or hear.

W: I think you and I are the kind of people that ... we formulate ourselves a lot through speech also but also we have a tendency generally to discuss. We, like, we are very analytical. And I do not mean that you are not, but I'm just saying that we talk a lot. We happily dive into long discussions about stuff and like and therefore we get pretty involved and a bit obsessed by it and therefore we are more comfortable with it because we think less when we do it and I do not feel nearly as natural or comfortable in that way about my body.

W: I rather do that. I don't what it is like for you guys. I mean, I rather talk less and act more.

M: Yes, I'm the same.

W: Yes, I think that really depends...

M: I felt that I feel ... yes but ... I felt more exposed when I have to talk because talk, it, it can sometimes lead nowhere it can be that sometimes I say something incorrect, but if we do something then at least did something. Then at least I do something that I, I may not know how to explain how to do something but if I go and do it then I know. Then I know that I can do it.

W: It's about what you're used to I think. Because I'm not used to watching myself on film at all. I mean, at all. I've done it like twice in my life. Or maybe a few more times but then it's always like Wah! but like I heard voice recorded so many times, I can kind sit and record my self, like, I don't know, preparing for my work I record myself and listen to myself. So I hear myself all the time. I'm used to hearing my voice, I know what I sound like. I am also used to talking a lot. I'm used to formulating my thoughts. And I guess it's due to, well, yes, three years of studying at university. Or like, that could be factors that influence this I mean.

W: And I'm more used to seeing my body on film than I am to hearing my voice.

W: But you're also a model so you've been photographed, talking about taking someone's body and taking someone's voice. I was thinking that your body, you've been working with it in a way that it should represent something through photography and film, so much in a way.

W: yes

M: So it's interesting, actually. At the same time, I like to stand in front of four hundred people and talk.

W: I do too!

M: There is nothing strange about that

W: I think it's great fun to be with my body on stage so it's odd then. But I think it's easier to show my body to people on stage more so than being filmed...

W: Yeah I'm the same, about my voice, being recorded, it makes me feel more vulnerable. Because then I can not control the process. But if I'm standing in front of people and maybe make mistakes or say something and then realize that that was not such a great statement then I can change my mind.

W: Hmm, but it is also because people can listen to and watch you without you knowing. I think. So, if you're on a stage, then obviously you are aware that you are there and that people are watching you. But in this case, people can sit and watch this movie, or listen to your voice, without you yourself being aware of it happening at all. That's different then. I didn't think of that. That's scary. Because I mean, it will, if this exhibition would last for a week I'm here one of the days. The rest of the week there will be lots of people watching and listening and I won't know about it.

W: Exactly, what if it is shown at the Word of Life and what I have been saying? I have no positive feelings towards that place whatsoever!

laughter

W: Generally, it is risky to say things like that.

W: yes, yeah

W: (whispering) But I don't care.

laughter

W: I am the girl in the green dress in the film...

laughter

W: Stop!

W: No, let me go! Let me go!! Auch! Do not pull my hair!

laughter

W: Don't fight!

W: Okay, we're kind of loosing it now.

M: Max, don't hit me

laughter

A: Great!