

How does interactive art and performance
reform social bonds?

Alivia Goldhill

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Preface

I have always wanted to create work which removes the boundary between the audience and my artwork. I want people to be able to touch and interact with my work, and I managed to create an environment where people can directly be involved with my art by wearing my sculptures. Initially, this dissertation was about the changing role of a spectator in wearable sculpture, but I found myself interested in the reasoning and importance of the changing role of the spectator in relation to the evolving digital world. My focus on wearable sculpture shifted to the focus on escaping the digital world through interactions.

After beginning research, I decided I wanted to use my work as a tool to momentarily live in the real world and escape the digital trap of social media. I did this by creating a social environment where the viewers can build a connection with real people through the interactions of my sculptures.

This piece of writing is the beginning of my investigation of understanding the use of performance and interactive art to create new human consciousness and social bonds as a means of escaping the simulated life we are living digitally. I will utilise my findings by applying this to a contemporary context and encouraging interactions, not only within but also around my artwork. This dissertation is facilitating the discovery of new ways of creating wearable sculpture through my new understanding of the role interactive art plays in creating real social dimensions.



Figure 0- Alivia Goldhill, 'body connector', 2020

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Introduction

The post-Cold War Internet allowed for a new type of spectatorship to develop with the introduction of the new 'social spectacle'. The new social spectacle being social media platforms which will enable communications to take place online. This dissertation will explore the issues concerning the social spectacle in society and how art can be used as a tool to combat it. This dissertation will focus on the active role played by audiences, and the effects interactions/performances have on social bonds. Social bonds can be defined as the socialisation and formation of relationships. This dissertation will refer to real social bonds that occur in the real world and not simulated social bonds formed in the digital world, created by the social spectacle.

This dissertation will chronologically look at a variety of critical performative pieces which stimulate people to create social change, beginning with Nijinsky's Rite of Spring (1913), bringing it into a contemporary context, by looking at more recent pieces. I will specifically look at critical moments in art history which have impacted the way audiences behave.

Joseph Beuys famously said that "every human being is an artist," this dissertation will further explore this idea by considering artworks which require the intervention of a participant to create the piece. This will take the shape of wearable sculpture and immersive environments, which require interactions to function. This dissertation will focus on artworks which have a methodical function for the attainment of new positions of consciousness, to establish human relationships in the world.

Lastly, this dissertation will look at the digital spaces created by virtual reality and cinema and the issues surrounding the use of digital platforms in an already apprehensive, technology-controlled society.

Chapter 1

Modern-day use of social media

The development of new technologies has led to a new social "spectacle;" subsequently, society has built their lives on digital platforms (Alberro:2008:69-70). The social spectacle has consequently made our social bonds weaker; we no longer experience complicated real relationships, and we can ignore problems. People use social media as a means of easy entertainment and escapism, curating our lives around a perceived sense of flawlessness. We are rewarded with likes and follows, and we associate that with value, and we associate that with truth, supporting Debord's idea of us becoming onlookers of our own lives, lived experiences have "receded into a representation" (1994:2). Vargas Llosa presented us with the issue of prioritising images over ideas; we are glued to screens and accept the information fed to us, trapped in a superficial world (2015). Both Debord and Vargas Llosa show societal issues surrounding social media. Social media is replacing our notion of reality, allowing us to form inauthentic relationships fueled by empty content- unable to distinguish between a simulation and an authentic experience. This inability to distinguish could be referred to as 'Hyperreality,' described as when the idealised representations of reality exceed reality. When this unrealistic idea cannot be reached, we are left feeling empty.

Social bonds cannot be formed online because digital platforms only permit a simulation of life to be presented, and therefore, only a simulated version of social bonds can occur. This is why the social spectacle is problematic. It is vital that authentic social bonds are created, in person, to provide a sense of reality. Art can do this by giving the audience greater involvement in the creative process.

The digital revolutions are signalling towards the obsolescence of visual art (Bishop: 2012). People believe that they can experience art through their phone. Viewing representations of artworks on a screen dismisses the arts presence in time and space. Digital reproduction of the work disregards the "aura" which is present in the original (Benjamin: 1969:4). The social spectacle makes us passive spectators as we scroll aimlessly, not considering the content. Social media has softened social change because we feel like we are connected to the art world; however, we are just feeding into the idea of the spectacle. Being part of the art world through a screen will only allow for a simulation of social bonds to be created, no real interactions can occur in isolated space.

Debord criticises the development of the spectacle and suggests that we have "downgraded" our priorities, shifting from being to having (1994:16). This is a consequence of a society which is becoming increasingly materialistic. Both Alberro and Debord suggest that we are replacing real experiences with second-hand experiences, with the image replacing the object (Alberro:2008:70). Bishop applies

both Alberro and Debord's criticism of the spectacle to emphasise the importance of participation in a society which has been "rendered numb" by the oppressive mechanism of capitalist production (Bishop: 2012:11). An important shift in lived experience in recent years, brought about by internet technology, is the global nature of our experience, with ideas able to travel instantaneously around the world. These texts suggest that we cannot continue creating art which allows passive spectatorship to take place; artists need to reinforce reality and rectify social bonds lost through technology, highlighting the importance of interactivity in art. We must escape the digital world and form real connections in which the spectator is engaged and forced to think for themselves, formulating their own opinions. Experiencing artwork is essential information that no digital platform can give you.

Chapter 2

The evolving audience in performance

Meyerhold's 'rational' approach to theatre meant that rationality was exclusively reserved for directors and actors with audiences remaining impartial and passive (Kleberg:1993:101). Jacques Ranciere criticised this mode of spectatorship, where audiences are withheld from knowledge and stuck in their seats (Ranciere:2011:63). Passive spectatorship prevents the action of understanding and therefore stops any further action facilitated from this understanding. This suggests that passive spectatorship is a negative concept, that viewing artwork is diametrically opposed to understanding; as a result, active spectatorship should be encouraged. Theatre audiences have been categorised into "good" and "bad" (Butsch:2000:8). The classification of a good and bad audience has shifted over time. In the 19th century, a good audience would be passive, and an active audience would be bad. The 20th century saw this flip, with the encouragement of active audiences. The active audience is one which is engaged; this does not always mean physically; this could mean mentally.

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* 1913, was scandalous and did not follow the conventions of dance at the time. Nijinsky's choreography was thought to be barbaric and arrhythmic. The combination of the dissonant cords from Stravinsky's score and jerking movements from Nijinsky's choreography caused a riot due to its modernity. The audiences were left startled with 40 arrests made on the opening night (Hewett:2013). The audience was accustomed to traditional, elegant, flowing music and dance movements, which is far from what they received. Although not the desired reaction, this was a radical piece of theatre, provoking thoughts, turning the audience from passive to active.

Classical performance included a script, text, narrative, directors and actors (Goldberg: 2004:64). This was challenged by the Bauhaus, who aimed to find a relationship between all artistic processes which resulted in a new societal equilibrium of our visual environment (Birringer, J 2013:41). Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic ballet*, 1924, (figure 1) defied the traditional properties of performance. The shape and materiality of the costumes determined the dancer's movements, encouraging the dancers to depart from traditional ballet techniques. Ordinary movements were distorted as the performers were stripped of human characteristics; the performers were just an assortment of geometric shapes (Dearstyne, H 1986: 175). This enabled the dancers to explore the relationship between body and space through a non-literal narrative using synchronised movements. These bulbous, sculptural costumes demonstrate a model of subjectivity that reflects the volatility of the era (Goldhill:2020). The Triadic Ballet permitted Schlemmer to create a new cross-disciplinary, surprising experience on stage, producing a metaphysical theatre. This degenerate piece of art makes the audience respect

every possibility of movement from the body. The Triadic Ballet acted as a stepping stone for future performances by dissolving pre-existing conventions. Nijinsky and Schlemmer's use of radical dance within a social sphere stimulated discussion and curiosity, in turn creating social bonds.



Figure 1- Oskar Schlemmer, Triadic Ballet costumes, 1924

Cabaret Voltaire, a Zurich nightclub, opened in 1916 demanding the destruction of the old ways of happening. Emmy Hemmings and Hugo Ball put on soirees which lacked seriousness intending to replace elite aesthetics. The founders did not have a background in performance; their dismissal of traditional performative techniques allowed them to create provocations. The absurd and anarchic performances were in pursuit of something real and absolute after World War One left them in a state of uncertainty (Gordon:1993:12). Marcos Janco's masks, 1916, (figure 2) were created for an improvised performance at the Cabaret Voltaire. The masks demanded definite, energetic gestures, bordering on madness. They worked with only natural sounds which the body could make and no instruments. The use of masks was instrumental in some of the performances which took place because they gave participants the power to deceive and become someone else, encouraging participation.

The group of artists at Cabaret Voltaire later created the term 'Dada'. This controversial movement comprised of satirical and irrational performance and poetry. Breton described Dada as a "state of mind" rather than describing physical characteristics, favouring personal experience over physical objects (Melzer:1993:48). Dada was the precursor to blending art and life. This blending took the form

of the lived experience of the participants, often leading to active participation, which in turn formed social bonds, challenging Debord's idea of us prioritising having over being (1994:16).

Augusto Boal devised the term "spect-actor" to describe those involved in forum theatre. It refers to the audience and actors being on an equal playing field, as they equally observe and produce dramatic meaning to the performance. The spect-actor should be a concept applied to all artworks, to demolish the distinction between artists and their audience, dissolving hierarchy in artworks. This level playing field will be an essential precursor to social change. This means that the participant can apply their understanding onto the real world. The removal of the hierarchy assists the information exchange between artist and viewer. The artist, in this sense, gives the audience access to power and the means for social change.



Figure 2- Marcel Janco, 'Mask for Firdus', 1917-18

John Cage once said that "theatre was in the mind of the beholder, they are doing their own experience and that it's not being done on them" (Goldberg: 2004:63). It is the audience's own experiences being reflected upon themselves and keep space from the stage, which becomes the theatre. Bertold Brecht shared Ranci re views on spectatorship, subsequently transforming contemporary theatre with his dramaturgy. Brecht's plays often challenged the audience by offering scenes from everyday life which allowed them to see the truth and their own choices, revealing their

mistakes and worries, encouraging them to change. Brecht's plays never revealed a finalised destination, answer or solution, the spectator, is always left to make their own interpretations and have their own responses. Brecht wanted his theatrical space to be an assembly where people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests, but the discussion provoked surrounding his theatre also allowed the audience to create social spheres outside Brecht's theatrical space.



Figure 3- Yoko Ono, 'Cut Piece', 1964

Fluxus artists in the 1960s aimed to create art constantly and promoted living art. They wanted to remove the social barrier in art, meaning that you do not have to be educated to understand art. Fluxus artists promoted inclusivity, encouraging people to experience art. Joseph Beuys, a member of the Fluxus movement, created participatory art and social sculpture. A social sculpture embraces relationships and human activity that attempt to form and build a society or the environment. The artist becomes a mediator of discursive changes in politics and society. Yoko Ono's 'Cut Piece', 1964, (figure 4) is a prominent interactive performance of this movement in which Ono summons the audience to be involved in the creation of art. In this performance, the participants were initially very hesitant; eventually, participants became more courageous in the cutting of Ono's dress. The participants interact with one another through their chain of actions, creating a connection between the participants, allowing the reformation of social bonds. Not only does this performance restore sociality, but it also illuminates the issue of how we accept the information given to us at face value, and we do not question the implications this may have. The performance shows us how looking without responsibility could have eventually led to the destruction of the object of perception. In the image-reliant society of the 21st century, this contribution is of exceptional importance.



Figure 4- Leigh Bowery, 'Session VII, Look 38', 1994



Figure 5- Gilbert & George, 50th-anniversary celebration portrait, 2017

Taking the unity of art and life to the extreme, Leigh Bowery (figure 4) and Gilbert & George (figure 5) created their own sculptural language, a visual language that anyone can identify with and comprehend (Tate Modern:2007:1). The use of costume is prevalent in living, walking works of art, permanently on display. The use of the human body makes for a suitable medium because it is easily identifiable and easy to resonate with. Bowery's flamboyant designs were usually showcased in nightclubs. His outfits were exceptionally provocative, usually altering the body's natural appearances and distorting his shape. Gilbert & George, over time, have become an embodiment of their work, wearing matching outfits which showcased the duality of their personas. Debord claimed second-hand experiences had replaced authenticity (Debord:1994). With living artworks, this cannot be the case because all experiences are first-hand and therefore, easily create social bonds. Living sculptures create a "phantasmagorical realism" (Bracewell:2017:28). This sense of fantasy created transports the viewer into a meditative state, questioning what is real and what is not. Gilbert & George and Bowery create a new stream of human consciousness by creating works based on feeling rather than intellect, making the audience question "what the shitting hell does this mean to me?", inviting the viewer to interrogate and hunt for their truth (Bracewell:2017:14). Both Bowery and Gilbert & George's oeuvre excel most when they encounter people, encouraging and celebrating life and question their reality, bringing them into the real world.

Wearable Sculpture

Robert Morris described the relationship between the work and the viewer as an "intimacy," acknowledging the exchange between work, space and viewer in time creating situations, in which physical participation becomes "necessary" (Morris:1968:231). The best participants are not usually engaged in art or performance, but the ones who take part in activity (Kaprow:1966:103). These participants do not adhere to the pre-existing roles expected from a spectator, they immerse themselves into the experience, and as a result, interpersonal relationships can be developed. The most successful participatory sculptural pieces include communication between people. The objects are "mediators" for participation, which suggests the participants actions have higher importance than the sculptures due to the social bonds formed and its role in creating a new human consciousness (Clark and Oiticica:1969:110). The only way this type of work can function is for people to be in it. Franz Erhard Walther titled a series of sculptures 'instruments for process', which required activation from the audience. Walther intended to create a sculpture which would assist the interactions between the public by leaving multiple pockets for people to fill and activate the sculpture (figure 6). Walther's instruments for process have a straightforward and effective way of creating social bonds simply by physically connecting the participants with the material within close proximity.



Figure 6- Franz Erhard Walther, 'Werksatz (Workset)', 2008

Erwin Wurm's one-minute sculptures (figure 7) give the audience instructions on how to interact with his objects. The sculptures do not follow pre-existing standards or boundaries placed on individual and collective social reality, dismissing restrictions and rational behaviour. The instructions leave the

audience posing in bizarre and unnatural ways, activating the sculpture by holding this pose for only one minute. One minute sculptures disconnect oneself from everyday familiarities through peculiar actions and stances; this combined with the live elements of his work in ordinary settings gives Wurm's work an improved sense of actuality. Wurm's written instructions are better than visual because they offer subjectivity, allowing the participants to consider their applied meanings to the words. This gives the audience a chance to explore their corporeality in a free experimental manner. One-minute sculptures offer the participants a chance to reinvent, or at least briefly experience another psychological framework for their lives beyond the boundaries of ordinary life. All gestures made by the participants become a mode of self-expression, allowing the one-minute sculpture to attain a poetic existential purpose, where the content becomes a state of individuation, therefore giving the individual unique self-actualisation. This work can encourage a new way of life, and new realities built on societal individuality rather than the generalised view of our needs and wants, so predominant in a consumer service economy of our globalised work (Guattari: 1995:19).



Figure 7- Erwin Wurm, 'Outdoor Sculpture, Taipei', 2000

Users also activate Rebecca Horn's theatrical designed sculptures. Horn's body extensions act as tools that "go beyond common experience" by analysing self-perception and transcending personal subjectivity, therefore exceeding everyday life (Bularca:2019:331-335). This is evident in 'Finger Gloves' (figure 8). Much like Brecht's theatre, the audience is made to reflect on their decisions and

keep a distance from the main event; they are not invited to participate. Horn's performances are pre-recorded, and only the wearers of the pieces can experience this momentary relief that can be found in Wurm's one-minute sculpture. Documentation is an entirely inadequate substitute for the actual experience of do-it-yourself artworks, which emphasised lived experience to counter the passive absorption of images churned out by an increasingly powerful of 'society of the spectacle'.



Figure 8- Rebecca Horn, 'Finger Gloves' 1972

Relational aesthetics defines work which revolves around human action and social context rather than independent and isolated space. Relational Aesthetics called for the demise of the art object as a source of aesthetic and commercial value, through the emphasis of sensual perception instead of the removal of sensual pleasure (Dezueze:2007). This has created "new models of sociability" which allows participants to build social bonds (Bourriaud:2002:19-24). Relational aesthetics call for the interactivity and for real connections to be made between people. Helio Oiticica exhibited 'Parangolés' in the Turbine Hall (figure 9), where the audience was invited to dance the Samba. Dance has been used in ceremonies, celebrations, rituals and as a form of entertainment; it is an inclusive activity that everyone is familiar within all cultures. The use of dance in this piece encouraged the participants to enjoy themselves and let go of external stresses. The leading performer is no longer the artist but the visitor. Audiences assume a performance role in relation to the work; therefore, they are partly in control in the outcome of the work. Oiticica defined parangolés as "an animated situation and sudden confusion and/or agitation between people" (Oiticica:1965-66:108). The keyword in this definition is between, which indicates a connection or relationship between two or more individuals. The

participants are given raw, cheap materials to wear, and they are given the option whether they would like to dance, dress or just watch. Otitica's use of material initiates a connection between people through shared dress code, which provides added comfort to people who are leaving their comfort zones. By making this dress code, Otitica has created a shared experience in which people will imitate one another in their reaction towards the fabric. The draped fabric acts as a costume; the participant can temporarily take on another persona and disappear within the crowd. This performance momentarily provides the participant with distractions technology, and their focus is brought to the people around them. Parangolés is effective in creating new social bonds by producing moving experiences of communal surprise and enjoyment that might be indicative of another sociality away from the social spectacle.



Figure 9- Helio Otitica, 'Parangolés', 2007

Chapter 3

Interactive Environments

In no.32, 1967, (figure 10) Walther had nine participants, each carrying a handle to lift the canvas from the floor. The participant's interactions are paramount to this piece. In this example, participation and interactions are inseparable. Interactions between people must take place because they are all attached to one object; without any communication, the group cannot move. Bishop distinguished the difference between participation and interactivity; interactivity can be categorised by physical actions, whereas participation can be defined by the social elements (Bishop:2006). Bishop later clarified that participatory art is constituted of more than one person, while interactivity suggests a one-on-one relationship (Bishop: 2012). There is a failure to clarify what happens when the interaction includes more than one participant, and therefore the two become inextricable. These definitions cannot be applied to artwork involving more than one person. Collaborative art created between artists and the public is an example of when the interactivity and participation become mutually exclusive, the interactivity informs the participation (Kester:2011:2). Putting a limitation on the number of people allowed to interact with an art piece contradicts the reasoning behind the creation of interactive art. Interactive art was created with the sole purpose of creating a less alienating and non-discriminative environment to show art (Tate:n.d). Interactivity and participation should be used interchangeably, allowing for maximum inclusivity.



Figure 10- Franz Erhard Walther, 'No.32', 1967



Figure 11- Carsten Höller, 'Test Site', 2006

Blurring the lines between artwork and audience usually takes the form of an environment or as objects to be handled or worn, transforming spectators into participants. Popular in the 1960s, artists typically used their works as "Springboards" for the viewers, a tool which enables the participant to express their, feeling, thoughts and actions (Clark and Bois:1994:101). These artists did not want to dictate an outcome but "produce a form of consciousness" and energy for action (Ranciere:2009:14). Often utilising a mode of play and tapping into the participant's sense of curiosity artists can break down pre-existing authorship. Carsten Höller's Unilever series allowed participants to experience childlike play by transporting themselves across the gallery via a giant slide (see figure 11), this simple act involved "relinquishing control," allowing participants to enter a state of mind which is free from constraint (Tate:2006). Kaprow created environments where visitors left unsure of which parts of their experience were part of a social or physical context and which are art. The importance to this dissertation is what occurs socially away from the art piece, where social bonds are reformed. This cannot happen without interactions. Simply being within the environment, you become a participant of an improvised social performance by creating interactions between people. Environments allow participants to become fully immersed by an experience.

Immanuel Kant insists that the experience of an environment is subjective. The way we combat infinite space is to assign our own experience of space on to it (Allais:2009). This can be experienced in Antony Gormley's *Clearing VI* (figure 12). In this art piece, the room is filled from floor to ceiling with large coils of metal, and the audience must choose their own path to navigate through space. The spectator's navigation becomes part of a performance, and therefore the audience becomes part of the artwork. Arguably, the path chosen is more significant than the piece, 'The whole thing becomes more interesting when you make your own passage through' (Wenman 2004:52). The different movements are chosen to reflect the individuals' different experience of the environment; their interpretations of the work become visible through their physical actions. The same applies to Olafur Eliasson's *Din Blinde passage* (*Your Blind Passenger*), a 39-meter long corridor field with dense fog. Whilst inside the corridor, the dense fog only permits visibility for 1.5 meters ahead of you (figure 13). With the sense of sight removed from you, participants are reliant on other senses to navigate through space. From a personal experience, I became dependant on following the voices ahead of me and feeling the walls for direction whilst taking little steps. All participants plunge themselves into blindness, and the journey towards the exit becomes somewhat of a performance. Participants are left to explore and negotiate the space around them, adapting to their surroundings, providing us with the "greatest thrill" (Cumming:2019). Participation art is the "beholder in action" using personal experiences and instinct as their primary tools (Almenberg:2010:5). *Din Blinde passage* is a spatial test to our logic, the combination of blindness, movement of people and the sounds which follow can confuse the participant, activating the participant's engagement. As a participant, the unknown forces you to form trust in the strangers around you, forming a real connection. In *Searching for Arts new publics*, Walwin states that there is a fine line between the artwork and audience, suggesting that the art piece can be separated from the spectator (2010:11). This is not plausible in the context of interactive/participatory art because the audiences become part of the art through their decision making.

Alberro stated that there had been a shift from cognitive to sensorial in the art world; we no longer need to understand the artwork we only need to feel it (2008:71). The previous artworks discussed all create a feeling and not an understanding. Art is to be "Fully" experienced, and an understanding is no longer necessary. Art will affect us just by living with the consequences of the given experience (Wall et al:2004:46). This makes art more inclusive to social change because a higher understanding is not required.



Figure 12- Antony Gormley, 'Clearing VI', 2019



Figure 13- Olafur Eliasson, 'Din Blinde passage', 2010

Chapter 4

Virtual reality

In a world filled with mechanised bonds and interactions, relationships are often impersonal; we are not experiencing real encounters only "spectacular" representations (Debord::1994:9). We must become self-directed and independent from the media; we should be trying to break from this trend-orientated routine and live in the real world and create real connections. Virtual reality creates a "life-like" sensory sphere within a closed-off space (Grau:2003:3). Walter Benjamin argued that gestures could only be found within the reality of today (Benjamin:1998:23). The realistic imitated gestures taking place in Virtual reality are worthless in the sense that these can only form digital social bonds, and no real social bonds are built from this experience because no real interactions can occur. Virtual reality is aiding the disappearance of community. It is argued that there is an importance to explore the Virtual extensions of the body in higher space (Duguet et al:1997:155). Virtual reality is important to create an experience that is not otherwise possible. However, we should first address our real bodies in real space before we begin to explore the metaverse, especially in a society which is struggling with hyperreality.

Marina Abramović's performance 'The Life' (figure 14), merges both real and virtual worlds. The spectators were provided with wearable spatial computing devices (Harris:2019). Users were brought into a virtual world through three-dimensional graphics and multi-channelled, spatialised sound (Wands:2006:99). The use of these wearable headsets creates a hermetically closed off image space, offering a completely alternative reality. The problem with this work is that although interaction occurs, it is not an interaction between people, but an interaction between a computerised image and a person. The disconnected nature of this work prohibits the forming of any real social bonds. By placing the participant into a simulation of the world, it creates a paradoxical loss of the physical body in the virtual world. Abramović's 'The Artist is Present'(figure 15) is one of the most successful performance in terms of social change. Unlike 'The Life in Mixed Reality', the experience created is very real and is easily reflected in real life, exemplifying Abramović's capability of creating social change. Although beautifully simple, the reaction from participants is intense. This piece asks the participant to slow down their body and mind and stay in this state for a period. This slowness is crucial in eliminating external factors, especially in such a fast-paced world. The participant gets the full attention of Abramovic, with no distractions from the outside. There was no verbal communication within this piece; the sole purpose is to form a deeper connection which cannot be formed through the social spectacle. Abramović becomes a mirror of their own-self, and as a result, this piece becomes

very powerful and emotional, transforming the participant. The participant can feel a real connection between people and not a simulation.



Figure 14- Marina Abramović, 'The Life', 2019



Figure 15- Marina Abramović, 'The Artist is Present', 2010

Artists negotiate and replicate realities, aided by real images. They make work where their images supersede their realities—feeding into the social spectacle. Artists have contributed to the degradation of their discipline by concentrating on the novelty factor of technologies (Medosch:1998:159). The focus on technology has consequently led to a lack of real social dimensions and a failure to create social bonds.

Cinema

The cinema provides a better platform than virtual reality because interactions occur between people; audiences are not sealed off hermetically. Artists have cleverly deployed the use of this sociality to exemplify their priority of experience over the picture, leading to the creation of 'expanded cinema'. Expanded cinema challenges the conventions of cinema's spectatorship and allows the audience to experience immersive image environments and take on participatory roles. Since the Golden Age of cinema (the 1930s), the popularity of cinema has decreased due to films being televised. A further decrease in the popularity of cinema occurred when audiences could stream film content on computers and phones, which means that films can now be consumed without the experience of social bonds in an isolated setting (science and media museum:2020). The use of expanded cinema combats the isolated experience now present when streaming films. Lis Rhodes 'Light Music', 1975, (figure 16) transformed the Tanks at Tate Modern in 2012, giving the audience a fundamental participatory role in her immersive cinematic environment. The use of multiple screens encourages the audience to migrate around the environment whilst simultaneously engaging with the projections. The engagement with the light beams creates social relations which transforms cinema into a shared experience, with no focal point. Light music is a collective event void of isolation; the audience is expected to contribute to the work and communicate with each other, creating social bonds.



Figure 16- Lis Rhodes, 'Light Music', 1975

Conclusion

The combination of rapid transmission and constant bombardment of information has caused confusion within society, where we are unable to distinguish between the represented and the real. The real world can no longer compete with the speed of the image, and therefore people are living in a simulated reality in which their human relationships lack real social dimensions. Art can be used as a tool to reinstate reality and create social bonds by creating a shared experience. The blending of art and life is a recurring theme in artworks which achieve the reformation of social bonds. Performance and interactive art have been effective in creating social change through direct and indirect approaches. Direct being the formation of social bonds by creating a physical, social space with real social dimensions. Indirect being work which causes spectators to reflect the work onto themselves and question their reality, making them aware of their situation, eventually leading to social change. Removal of boundaries in radical theatre and early performative artworks provided a framework for future artworks to create interactive, shared experiences. Over time audiences have become more active, both physically and mentally, and the blending of art and life has become crucial in ameliorative role in reforming social bonds. Interactive art should be considered a social necessity due to its valuable contributions to society through the attainment of new positions of consciousness and creation of social bonds. A level playing field between artist and audience must be initiated so that everyone feels comfortable within the artwork and in turn can gain from the piece.

The covid-19 pandemic has been problematic to the underpinnings of this dissertation as it has been impossible for performance and interactive artwork to take place. Many cultural destinations have been shut, causing a surge of the online activity surrounding the arts (The Art Newspaper:2020). Online viewing rooms and virtual tours of galleries have replaced real, shared experiences. This replacement has been vital in making art accessible in these unprecedented times. The problem presented by this is that it does not take us away from digital social platforms, it encourages them, therefore feeding into the social spectacle. It is important to note that galleries are showing a simulated version of artworks which cannot replace the original. One cannot fully experience artwork through a screen. A representation of an artwork does not reciprocate the 'aura', nor can it create an experience which authentic social bonds are formed. All participation has been online.

Consequently, personal human interactions are absent. Moving forward, when galleries re-open and social distancing is no longer required, artworks must reform social bonds lost during the coronavirus pandemic. An emphasis on interaction on a basic human level is required to restore the art world and prevent it from supporting the formation of digital social bonds over authentic social bonds.

The social spectacle is leading to the demise of real human connections. It has become evident that art needs to be interactive to deconstruct the social spectacle and reestablish a sense of reality and reform social bonds in an otherwise confused, digitally controlled society.

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