

XYZ

NYC









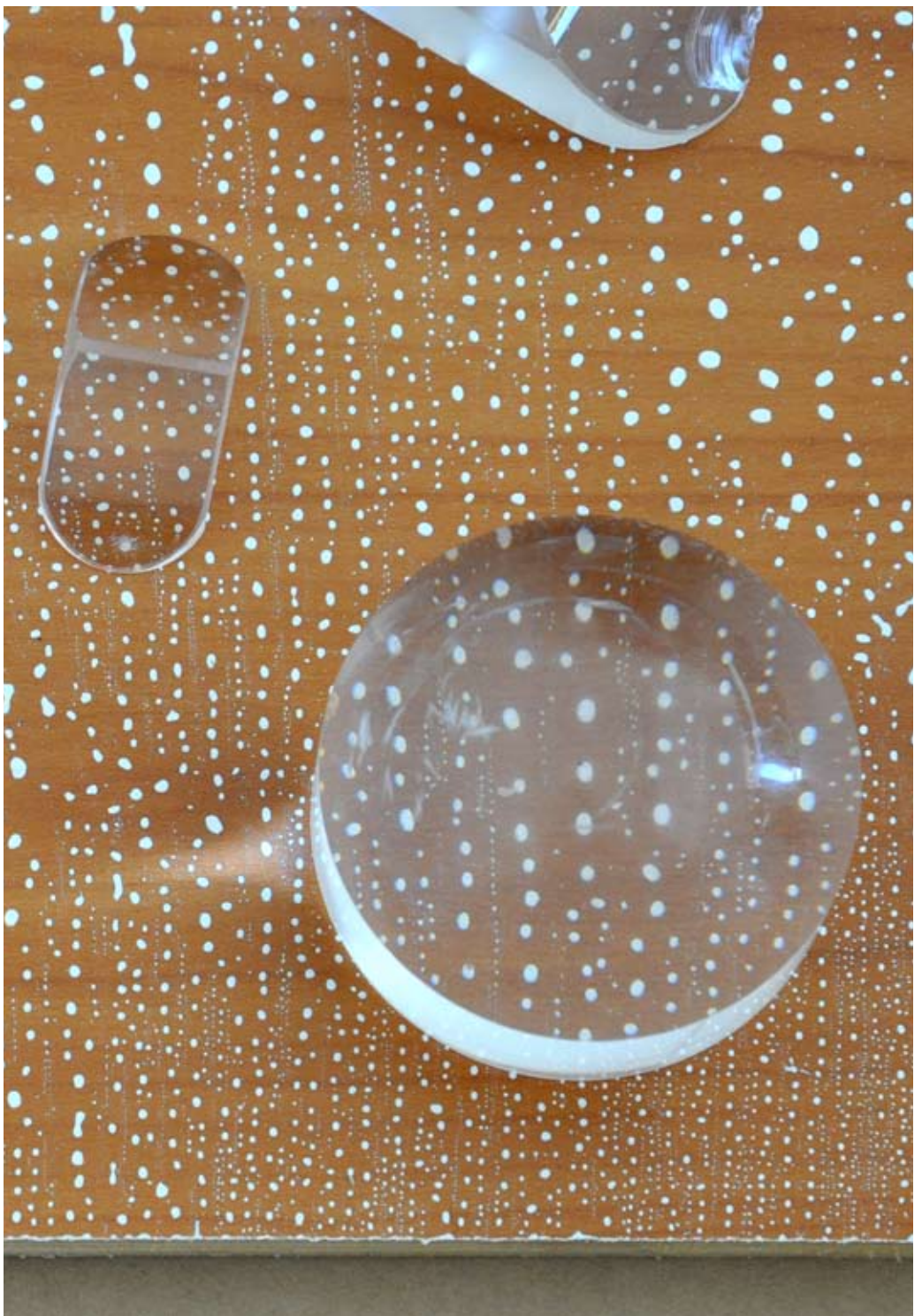












XYZ











pp. 2–5:

XYZ, *POINTFORM* (2004)

mirror film, steel frames, existing
architectural features

Conical, Fitzroy, Australia

pp. 6–7:

Leslie Eastman, *The Visible and the Invisible* (2004)

mirrored polycarbonate and stainless steel
Shown in *Swoon*, curated by Juliana Engberg
ACCA, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

pp. 8–9:

Natasha Johns-Messenger, *Yellow-2011* (2011)

mirror, fabricated walls, peep-hole & live view
Shown in *Power to the People*, curated by
Hannah Mathews
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Natasha Johns-Messenger, *ThisSideIn* (2010)
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New York Public Art Fund commission, Metro-
tech, Brooklyn, New York. Shown in *Double Take*,
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XYZ, *Synoptic II* (2011)
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Light Projects, Melbourne, Australia

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acrylic panels, stainless steel & electric motors
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XYZ, *POINTFORM* (2004)
mirror film, steel frames, existing
architectural features
Conical, Fitzroy, Australia

Turning on Axes of Light

Melissa Miles

Light and optical phenomena have long fascinated artists and philosophers. Ever in pursuit of light, they have tirelessly studied its effects and put forward innumerable theories about its makeup. The ancient Greeks believed that light originates in the eye and flows in a fiery stream to the objects that are seen. To Empedocles, the sun was not a source of light but merely a facilitator that allowed this fire in the eye to do its job. The later Greeks separated light as a vehicle for information from the eye, but continued to conceive of light as a 'thing' that travels through empty space. Aristotle's model of light is one such theory, in which light radiates from the sun, bounces off objects and ricochets into our eyes. Dual concepts of light, encapsulated by the couplet *lumen* and *lux*, have dominated western thought ever since—driving a conceptual wedge between light as an external agent existing independently of the eye and the experience of light in human sight.

We invest heavily in this divisive binary scheme. Even when it is conceived objectively, light has a profound impact upon how we relate to and represent the world around us. The notion of geometric rays of light travelling through space is privileged in Euclidean optics, and informs the construction of perspectival space in painting and drawing. Like studies in catoptrics (the science of reflections) and dioptrics (the science of refraction), perspectival representation establishes axes of light that help us to imagine ourselves within space in objective terms and override the subjective experience of the body. The Cartesian co-ordinates of *xyz* establishes an ordered triplet of lines that helps us to conceive of three-dimensional space similarly from the outside looking in.

The transparency of light is particularly seductive in these schemes, and a powerful metaphor for objectivity, clarity and truth. Light unveils, illuminates and reveals a way through. It facilitates seeing and knowing, helps us to negotiate space and makes objects present for the gaze. Through light we define our sense of being in space, and our sense of self. Both filling space and revealing its voids, light simultaneously separates and integrates the realm between the perceiving subject and the world of perceivable things. Hence to Emmanuel Levinas, 'Light makes objects into a world, that is, makes them belong to us.' But when we try to make light itself belong to us, it quickly evades our grasp. As a constant fugitive, it leaves only traces

of its presence in its relation to the objects and vapors that surround us, or through the shadows and reflections that it creates.

The artists Natasha Johns-Messenger and Leslie Eastman have a particular interest in such complexities, and in their multifaceted work, *XYZ-NYC*, construct a series of architectural, optical and technological webs for capturing light's traces and allowing us to study them at close range. Johns-Messenger is an Australian artist, currently living and working in New York, with an ongoing interest in disrupting pictorial space. In *XYZ-NYC*, she joins forces with Eastman, a fellow Australian artist of light and space, to raise questions about perception and its relation to light, architecture and technology.

The close connections between light, embodied perception and representation are a key starting point for this exhibition. However, in *XYZ-NYC*, lines of light are never as fixed as they seem, and may challenge as much as aid perception. With the use of the most simple of tools, the camera obscura and the mirror, the artists coax the formerly hidden relations between light, space and perception to the surface. In some ways, the camera obscura reinscribes myths of stable, productive and objective light. Its ability to restructure a three-dimensional scene on a two-dimensional surface made it an invaluable tool for painters, astronomers and philosophers since the seventeenth century. This device offers a means of observing solar phenomena such as sun spots and solar eclipses without risk of blindness, and by channeling rays of light through a tiny hole to project an image in its darkened interior, it forces light to conform to the predictable and rationalized laws of geometry. The projection of an image of the world into this darkened room also dramatizes the relations between the internal world of the observer and the observable world that lies outside, providing an evocative metaphor for rationalist philosophies and the Cartesian co-ordinates after which this exhibition is named.

However, as it turns an image of the outside world upside down and twists it back to front, the camera obscura also destabilizes the axes of light around which such philosophies revolve. The familiar high school art task of copying an image turned upside down demonstrates how such a reversal can radically shift our perception of space, form, light and shade. These shifts become all the more dramatic in Eastman's room size camera obscura where we can witness the world outside turned topsy-turvy on a cinematic scale. Philoso-

phers have made much of this reversal and its power to alter perception. For Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, the camera obscura's light does not offer truth and objectivity, but becomes a symbol of various political, ideological, perceptual and psychological processes that conceal, invert, contort, forget or confuse. In its ultimate failure to seize reality, the camera obscura reveals the contingency of light and its connection to embodied perception. When a digital image is projected on the reverse side of the screen on which the camera obscura image floats, a conversation is established between old and new technologies, that encourages us to question the veracity of light and perception in both digital and analogue realms.

Mirrors offer a different way of shifting perception that draws the viewer more deeply into the game. The mirrors that help to form Johns-Messenger's corridor warp our perception of space, simultaneously structuring it and opening it up. According to the conceptual artist Ian Burn, mirrors separate 'what is seen from what is'. They transform three-dimensional space by locking it within a flat plane and invite the complexity of that space to float on its surface. At the same time the mirror structures our seeing, it deflects attention away from itself as an object and focuses our attention on our own relation to the space that we occupy. In creating a misalignment between real and reflected spaces, it makes us question our experience of space and alters our perception of its architectural features. The temporality of spatial perception is also revealed in the two screens of stretched mirrored film that cut through the main space in *XYZ-NYC*. When we walk through the space bisected by the mirrors, the continual movement of our point of view is made strange and exaggerated by the mirrored film's taught, quivering surface. Apertures breaking through the mirrored surface enhance this tension, playing off the gap between the real and the reflected, and breaking the coherence of the image once again.

Light, images and perception forge a confused, contradictory relationship on the mirror's surface. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson suggests that the interruption or deflection of light that allows an image to emerge in reflection can be likened to perception itself, which can similarly only occur through interruption. In reflection:

The luminous point gives rise to a *virtual* image which symbolizes, so to speak, the fact that the luminous rays cannot pursue their way. Perception is just a phenomenon of the same

kind ... Perception therefore resembles those phenomena of reflexion which result from an impeded refraction; it is like an effect of mirage.

This notion of virtual or interrupted perception takes on added connotations with the use of wearable video headsets in Eastman and Johns-Messenger's participatory events, which allow participants to see a video image of the space viewed by another. By creating a disjunction between the view seen and the space occupied, the work creates a rupture between embodied and visual perception, while collapsing the positions of the observer and the observed.

Using an array of technologies, both old and new, light's trajectories are manipulated in *XYZ-NYC* to shift our perception and create a condition of indeterminacy where we are both feeling subjects and objects in space. As it moves through space, shines through apertures, bounces off the surface of mirrors and is channeled through a camera obscura, light cannot simply function as an agent of truth and clarity, but becomes a powerful tool for affecting our perceptions and revealing the complexity of our embodied relations to space, our sense of self and one another.

1. Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. A. Lingis, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2001, p. 40.
2. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology: Part One, With Selections from Parts Two and Three and Supplementary Texts*, ed. C.J. Arthur, New York, International Publishers, 1976, p. 47; Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1988, pp. 37–39; Sigmund Freud, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, New York: Pocket Books, 1975, pp. 305–06. For an analysis of the camera obscura metaphor in philosophy, see Sarah Kofman, *Camera Obscura: of Ideology*, trans. Will Straw, London: Athlone, 1998.
3. Ian Burn, *Minimal: Conceptual Work 1965–1970*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, 5 February – 29 March 1992, exhibition catalogue, p. 31.
4. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 37.

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The Indefinite Article

Andy Thomson

The world, which is the nucleus of time, subsists only by virtue of that unique action which both separates and brings together the actually present and the presented; and consciousness, which is taken to be the seat of clear thinking, is on the contrary, the very abode of ambiguity⁷

The space was pretty empty; perhaps they were between shows? In the gloom exacerbated by the now glaring Australian sunlight on the street outside, the floor of the gallery seemed lower and the space loftier and more expanded than feasible. A screen appeared from the dimness, suspended from the ceiling. It was barely illuminated but I detected the light of a video projection upon it as if darkness was projected onto the screen. I then saw a shadowy figure pass across in front of me. He was large, slightly stooped and hesitant, but almost predatory; I felt a shiver of fear and mild amusement — it was I.

The interlocutor is the person who installation art was invented for, and whose task, whether they like it or not, is to make art with the artist in the expanded field of their own apprehension and perception. This interlocution takes place over time; the interlocutor makes art from things and ideas that have been placed within the loci of their perceptual trajectory in a given space, at a particular time. Is that space as much given as is made apparent? Reversing what would seem normal, space is a practiced place, rather than place is a structured space.

A friend of mine's mother had a stroke and nearly died. She recovered enough to walk around after a while, but soon had to be guided after it was discovered that even though she was seeing with both eyes her brain was not processing all the information she needed to appraise her trajectory through space. In her negotiating her new reality, she collided into walls that were just not there, according to her malfunctioning brain. Even the physical principle of space is unsure and indefinite. When ceilings, walls and floors, mass and weight, duration and volume fall away, how will we orientate ourselves to the world?

Art practice, in taking on aspects of its own contemporary field, transforms these physical aspects of being, knowing and experiencing into its own set of conditions or parameters. So rather than having solely external conditions for its being, art has the capacity and language with which to create

its own internal state. These self-reflexive conditions can work to delimit and describe the artwork before any idea is generated, thus providing the one who experiences the work a slight or moveable concept of the real. Art given time makes certain that which it can't predict without proof.

For the time being, the second law of thermal dynamics seems, at least to the rational mind, irrefutable; body and mind continually move towards chaos and entropy. In knowing of our being in the world, where authentic time is calculable, time is represented (or signified) by clock time, as a measured marking of instants; tick, tock. In constituting our being in the world, time is calculated and understood as a passage through it, accountable and finite with the only possibility for moving back within it, created by our capacity to remember.

In describing being as a kind of being-there, or what they have termed 'Dasein', both Heidegger and Derrida describe existence or survival as being made of both authentic and inauthentic time. Time is most suitable for action, which is a manner of being that illuminates the subjective; awareness unfolds time and brings it about. To bring about the possibility of knowing time and space as an authentic and inauthentic illumination of being there, an artwork and its viewer must together make real what is not always apparent or actual.

A decision is an incision in time — I walked in and the space was full of people I knew. Like an improvised reunion, it was if I hadn't left and time had stood still. A work attracted my attention and allowed me to see sideways in the style of a modernist; I was actually able to see around corners. The turning of my gaze though neither a reason nor a cause, is a sign that motivates my apprehension and guides my orientation amongst things. Years before, I had experienced a student work where my image went around a series of corridors and finally I could see with the help of a video, the back of my own head, whilst at the same time was able to look at my own image as it reflected its way off, down and around the adjacent corridors. Because of the way that R Mutt extracted the urinal and urine from place, the marriage and fidelity of the signifier and the signified are forever disrupted by changes of context. Then and there in that work I am implicated again; is there no rest from this binocular interlocution?

Awareness of the present and the future is less vivid than awareness of the past because memory constructs a narrative of the past - a narrative that pleases and soothes the self. In this soothing,

memory plays an influential, though bit role in constructing projections, or bridges to the future. As time slips past, awareness of the present and the future are rendered less vivid than our awareness of the past because memory constructs the past as an irrefutable reality—it actually happened. The threshold to the future is created from and within the space of moment to moment. The crossing is made continuously and unconsciously as the mind acts as a projector does, uniting the individual frames of a film into a frequency that fools it into the perception of a flowing continuum. Though death, failure and success reside in the future, memory can't yet construct it according to the dictates of the self as it does with the past. Being here thus is constituted on having been there at some time or another.

Artworks can work to confound our sense of the 'natural' order of things and the flow of the arrow of time for long enough to know again, and know differently how it is we come to be, through the conditions of our experience. Confucius once said standing in front of a flowing stream that "time passes like this water" This expresses with immediacy our connection to nature, revealing our innate understanding and regard for our individual allocation and experience of time in our body, and also our need to (authentically) connect with and to understand our construction of our experience of the world, as it occurs, through bodily encounters in time and space, not always what they seem...

1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 388.
2. Meaghan Morris, paraphrasing DeCerteau, in 'Great Moments in Social Climbing: King Kong and the Human Fly', in *Sexuality and Space* by Beatriz Colomina.
3. Confucius (Kung Fu-tz) [551-479 BCE], *The Analects*, trans. Arthur Waley, Allen and Unwin, London; Everyman's Library, 2000 (9.27).

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 10/11/2011

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An interview with Natasha Johns-
Messenger and Leslie Eastman

Manon Slome with Camille Beinhorn

MS Let's begin with the nature of the collaboration between Natasha and Leslie.

Is this the first time you have worked together and if not, on what other projects have you collaborated?

LE This is the sixth collaboration that Natasha and I have worked on together. The collaboration goes back a long way in fact. We both studied at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Melbourne, Australia, and worked with a group of teachers and fellow artists around a series of questions to do with perception and the expanded field of pictorial space especially in terms of installation art. We've asked one of the key thinkers and artists from this time, Andy Thomson, to write an essay for the show. Natasha and I have worked together for over six years on six projects that focus on the experience of the viewer as the actual site and subject of the work. The form that these collaborations take varies, ranging from the wearable video headgear to architectural interventions and commissioned outdoor environments.

NJM To be more specific, our first project was *Pointform* at Conical Gallery in Melbourne 2004. Then there was *Formless* for Experimenta Vanishing Point, a commission for the Victorian Arts Centre in 2005; *Synoptic 2006* at MIR Gallery, Melbourne in 2006; *Light / Dark* at Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts in 2008 and *Synoptic 2011* at Light Projects, Melbourne earlier this year. It might be interesting to note here that some of the works like *Synoptic* have been modified and re-configured in additional spaces to further their ongoing development. In this way, over time the installations act like a series.

MS What was it about the other's art practices that encouraged the collaboration?

What was your collaborative process? Did you work together in the space to fuse ideas, or see how separate, existing works created a new conversation?

LE For me it was an understanding, I guess because of our shared training, of key questions about installation and the unspoken elements of process. Natasha has a wonderful approach to

making that is incredibly practical whilst also drawing on the intuitive. She has an immense force of willpower, a “chutzhah”, that is tremendous to be around. This is a genuine creative partnership that I really enjoy. The collaborative process helps me to do work I would not usually do, helps me move beyond the limits of my own thinking and process.

For both of us response to site is critical. The embodied experience of the space is something that I rely on to develop the work. 10 Downing Street complicates our usual process because I’ve only seen the space in representations. We’ve also decided that for this occasion we will combine solo and collaborative works synergistically which is a new approach.

NJM For me, wanting to collaborate with Leslie was born from the nature of his practice and our conversations about art. His installation work, like mine, stems from painting, not sculpture. He also shares an interest in re-presenting site as subject through phenomenological modalities. Beyond that, I simply wanted to art-jam with him to see what might come out. We always work from the space, we ‘get to know’ the spaces together then one of us will throw in an idea, and then other will either respond with a counter idea or add to the other’s. It goes on and on like this with sketching and conversations, then 3D modeling until we both feel we’re ready to start solidifying it more.

MS Your work employs space as a medium in its own right. What intrigues you about how we interpret space? What inspires you to work this way?

LE For me a stable sense of space (and time) are the founding conceits of contemporary subjectivity. We are both interested in revealing perception to be a creative act at odds with the idea that reality is a given. Space is both literal and metaphorical for us both. Space operates according to a set of principles from one perspective but, from a different perspective, is entirely paradoxical and so often overlooked as a contingent phenomenon. Exposing the space as an illusion is simply one way of revealing the interdependence of the observer and the observed. What inspires us to work this way? Drawing attention to the role the viewer plays in making the work, by extension points to connections between the viewer and their role as author of this reality which we all partake of and construct.

NJM All my installation works come out of the space in which I happen to be working, and a response to those spaces. Beyond that, the general conceptual objectives and theoretical agenda underlying my installation works has been three-fold: one, to dissolve parameters between art-object and its context by using the exhibition site as subject; two, to change the way immediate space is perceived or viewed by developing modes of representation such as real-time image capture inside optical viewing structures; and three, to create artworks that are predominantly experiential (not object based). In terms of artworld influences I guess I fit somewhere between Michael Asher and James Turrell.

MS Mirrors in your work create and fragment our perception of space and ourselves in the space, questioning what is real or imagined. The viewer only realizes there is a mirror in the space once they recognize their reflection, and the piece would function entirely differently if the viewers were not confronted with their own images. Do you see the work as having a psychological or philosophical nature? (I am reminded of Lacanian theories as well as philosophical notions of what is “real” or what is a reproduction of the real, “image”). How did you originally arrive at this idea of disguised fragmented space you have been exploring?

LE The mirror of course is both ubiquitous and profoundly mysterious. The mirror simultaneously asserts and denies its presence. As with our perceptual framework, it is at once visible and invisible. The mirror has an ‘impossibility factor’ that always fascinates me. The French director Jean Cocteau’s image of the mirror in the film *Orpheus* had a profound effect on me when I was young and a recent solo work of mine, *A History’s Shadow*, deals directly with the image of the child in the mirror.

For me the mirror is both philosophical and psychological in its many readings. The mirror is the Lacanian ground for an illusory, seemingly stable, identity but on a basic level it is the ultimate contingent image of the beholder. We have also used the mirror as an unstable two-way screen as in the work *Dark Light*. The two-way screen compounds this material creating a double reading of the real and represented.

NJM The use of mirrors was initially a part of a larger investigation of site-determined practice, however, as the works developed, and became

body-scaled and more experiential they took on more phenomenological concerns. I became very interested in the space between what happens when perceptually you think you ‘know’ something to be real, only to be mistaken, then there is a conversation between your logic and what your body is experiencing. As for the philosophical or theoretical thinking behind (or in front) of these investigations, I think the work is open to psychoanalytic readings through the likes of Lacan, however when creating these works, my concerns were more philosophical in nature. The most influential text for me being Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, specifically the writings on the intertwining of consciousness and perception.

MS You have used architecturally scaled mirrors to bisect the gallery space in previous exhibitions, has your idea for *Pointform* developed since you last created this type of installation?

LE The bisection of the entire space is something that we were both very excited about in the *Pointform* exhibition as a genuine collaboration of our respective interests. The *Pointform* work utilized a heat stretched mirrored film that we are both really keen to work with again. The film has a fabulous double life. Again it complicates the ‘impossibility factor’ of the mirror. It does not quite dissolve or deny its presence, like the ground of a canvas, lens flare or pixilation, and suggests transience and change through its mesmeric quivering qualities.

NJM Only slightly, this is because since doing *Pointform* in 2004, Leslie and I have wanted to re-configure the same principle in another space. Having said that, however, at 10 Downing, there will be an additional site related sculptural device, that of ‘doubling up’ the existing fluorescent lights in one of the *Pointform* pieces. We see *Pointform* as a principle or a methodology, that can move from one space to the next.

MS How much does the specific space impact the viewer’s experience? Or is it the viewers themselves who change the piece each time? Do you see this type of installation as having limitless possibilities when it comes to scale, installation and location?

LE The intention is to open up questions about the veracity and contingency of the real and to draw

attention to the beholder’s role in projecting a sense of permanence and stability upon it. In this sense the work is conjectural not definitive, sometimes proposing a union of subject and object and at others an infinite regress of figure and ground and self and other.

NJM It’s a bit like, which came first, the chicken or the egg. Because the works are experiential, and there’s no optimal way to negotiate them, the participant viewer makes their own way. Having said that, the works can be a very different experience if viewed in a group of people or going solo. The large unbroken mirrored devices used in *Pointform* have physical limitations but limitations can bring new ideas to the table too.

MS Your work involving mirrors creates a cyclic relationship between the viewer and what is being viewed. Leslie’s *Camera Obscura* piece functions similarly to bridge the inside and outside and confront the viewer with two opposite experiences simultaneously. Is this duality of experience how you see your work fitting together?

LE That’s right, the relationship between viewer and viewed, the techniques of the observer and observed are shared concerns. The *Camera Obscura*, of course, has been discussed in terms of a separation of viewer and viewed. We are both interested in scrutinizing these apparent demarcations or binaries behind this thinking. The simultaneity of these states is especially interesting to both of us. The mirror and the *obscura* simultaneously affirm Cartesian modeling and at the same time dismantle it. The first person experience of these works hopefully opens up questions for the viewer about experience of the real that is not at all simple.

NJM Yes, but the way I put it is...our work fits together within the relationship to site and the ‘framing’ of immediate space; whether it be through the lens of a *camera obscura* or the ‘real time’ image capture through mirrored structures.

MS Audience participation is again stressed in your *Synoptic 3* installation. What is it that the viewers/performers will experience while wearing the headgear?

LE The *Synoptic* work is a joyous participatory event in which the audience become the natural performers and subject(s) of the work. Again the ‘work works’ to reveal the creative role played

by the beholder in generating the art work. The expectation of the queuing audience is as much the work as the experience of the two participants wearing the peculiar headgear. The entire experience again is both actual and metaphoric. Synoptic addresses the complexity of the art experience and representation as we experience it through simple inversion and actions. The interlocutor, the beholder, the participant is treated with the greatest respect in the Synoptic performance. They and their experience are the subject and object of the work.

MS Does being in a specific country inform your work in any way? Or rather, do you find cultural differences in audiences to shape the response to the work ?

NJM I'm not sure that the work changes all that much from one country to the next, but, I think it's an interesting point that Australia has so much expansive space. This must play on the psyche of the individuals who grow up there. In this way, I would say that on levels that are hard to define, mine and Leslie's relationship to space generally must have differences from someone who grew up in New York.

MS Leslie—I have not worked with you before but could you also answer the question as to whether your work changes with the types of environment you show in?

LE Again for me site is critical. Natasha and I always say that we need to wave our arms around in a space in order to let the work arrive or appear. By this we mean that the embodied experience of a space is integral to allowing the abstract ideas we've been discussing in this interview take form or make sense on the intuitive level. Typically we have two notebooks that we wildly draw in as we have these preliminary conversations. Usually things become instantly clear after we do this for a while. There's usually an "ah-ha" moment. These things apply in my solo work as well but the process is more internal and slower.

MS Leslie—how does your academic work link in or inform your art practice?

LE Up until recently I would have said not that much. I'm a generous mentor and will share these ideas with interested students and I work to help students refine their own questions.

However in the last two years I've coordinated Light Projects, a non-profit experimental space in Melbourne, Australia, with a group of artists. Light Projects has provided great opportunities for me to develop projects with my students that are about a participatory community free from commercial and institutional constraint. These projects have explored theories of mind, psychoanalysis and the social turn in art practice in ways directly linked to my own work.

MS Any comments that the address of the exhibition is one of the most famous in the world — 10 Downing Street? From a linguistic/perceptory point of view—any thoughts on inversion of space here?

LE Interestingly not overtly. Some of my solo work relates directly to my own British heritage. I've always wanted to stage a show at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich near where some of my family originated. But the residence of the British Prime minister seems a long way from my interests. But who knows what dimensions might be opened up as a result of the famous title.

NJM The thing I love most about the address 10 Downing St, New York is that firstly, you do a double-take because of the UK's Prime Minister's house but it's the way the address works in New York. The way I understand it, every building on the block of 10 Downing St. including 6th Ave, is called 10 Downing St. It's quite absurd, in a good way. A strange associative thought comes to mind in relation to what is real and what is virtual inside the installation structures. Is that viewer real? Or is it this one? Is this 10 Downing St, or is that?

MS Anything else you would like to add?

NJM Thanks to No Longer Empty and Stonehenge for making these works possible!

LE My thoughts exactly!

XYZ:NYC-10 Downing

Natasha Johns-Messenger & Leslie Eastman

Published to coincide with *XYZ:NYC-10 Downing*

Curated by Manon Slome, President and Chief Curator,
No Longer Empty

10 Downing Street, Manhattan, New York, NY, USA

7-22 December 2011

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Acknowledgements:

The artists would like to acknowledge the support of No Longer Empty New York, Monash University Faculty of Art Design & Architecture, Stonehenge and the Australia Council for the Arts.

Special thanks to Manon Slome, Naomi Hersson-Ringskog and all the staff at No Longer Empty, New York, Melissa Miles, Andy Thomson, Emily Westmore, Emma Eastman, Danae Velenza, Therese Keogh, Lachlan Petras, Jake Carter, Catherine Newell-Pieper, Anna Bardas and Isabelle and James Rudolph for their help with the fabrication of the Synoptic Headwear.

XYZ commenced in 2003 as an ongoing collaborative project between Leslie Eastman and Natasha Johns-Messenger drawing on a shared interest in spatial installation practice and questions about the nature of perception.

Blurring the boundaries between real and represented space, XYZ work relies on the interaction of the viewer/participant, creating architecturally-scaled spaces in which both the viewer and the surrounding environment are strategically displaced in myriad ways. Employing optical devices such as mirrored surfaces, large-scale construction and video projection, the work actively seeks to challenge the beholder's experience of a particular site, as well as their experience of the act of looking itself. The encounter produced is at once both intimate and dramatic and has a poetic and philosophical dimension that questions the nature of the real and the limits of the perceiving self.

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