

# Analytical and Articulatory Analyses Supplement

Comprising Recently Received and Reviewed Material of an Animatical Nature  
Notes from "Ecstatic Truth," incorporating "Tangible Truth" references, in conference from Prague, April 2022

July-August 2022



Educational moments are becoming ever more influential, even among disciplines more accustomed to non-linear thought, whose inspired processes were once considered the sole properties of imagination. Hence, the evolution of an academic vs intuitive approach exists to explain right-brain activity, whether in the neurological sense, or as a foundation of didactic analysis. This ASIFA Central issue will explore some recent articles that have appeared in journals, both foreign and domestic, that reflect this trend, and perhaps a few others. They create the opportunity to examine different textural and scientific content for the benefit of a coterie of uniquely disciplined and diverse individuals who seek joy at the speed of light.



## AUGMENTING THE CITY - THE PHOTO-REALISTIC ANIMATION OF A HISTORIC BUILDING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SPATIAL PERCEPTION AND MEANING

MORITZ SCHWEIGER- JEFFREY WIMMER  
GREGOR NAGLER - RUBEN SCHLAGOWSKI

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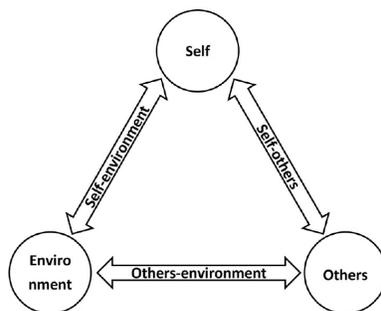
### ABSTRACT

"Augmented Reality (AR), defined as the holographic overlay of physical space with virtual objects in real time (Azuma, 1997), can be considered a prime example of mediatization. This development is particularly evident in the public space of the "mediatised city" (Hepp, Simon & Sowinska, 2018), being a focal point of the latest media technologies already overlaid with a multitude of AR content. But how does AR change the perception and meaning of urban space? And how can researchers capture methodically the appropriation of complex, large-scaled AR content experienced via high-tech AR glasses?

"To answer these questions, a historical building, that had been destroyed during the Second World War, was reconstructed as a

holographic animation on a public city square. In order to resurrect this building in AR, old photographs, paintings and postcards were evaluated and used to create a virtual model in the original size and place it at its original location.

"The test subjects were then able to view the hologram from various different angles using AR glasses (Microsoft HoloLens 2), move freely around the square and even enter it. Combining quantitative, before-and-after questionnaires and qualitative thinking-aloud protocols, our results show that the holographic animation of a historical building can influence both the sensual-aesthetic perception and the personal meaning of a public square for city dwellers. Specifically, our test subjects perceived differences in its accessibility, coherence and aesthetics, simplicity, atmosphere and legibility. The meaning of the square was altered with regard to personal memories (= the self), typical groups of people (= others) and certain opportunities (= environment) associated with it by city dwellers."



The three-pole model of spatial meaning following Gustafson (2001)

### Conclusions (partial) and Comment

"The holographic overlay of virtual objects on physical space is a development that will have a lasting impact on the cityscapes of the future. While research in communication and media studies is increasingly looking at the possibilities of small-scale, generic AR content, little is known about the extent to which large-scale, historically significant building holograms can change the personal connection to urban space."

The possible application of these observations and conclusions could be melded with historic preservation efforts in mid-size cities whose physical representations of achievement (ie, historic locations, significant structures, cultural iconography) has been reduced to a "historic parking lot" without much of a reason to use the asphalt-covered property. External holographic projections could provide nocturnal representations, or AR technology could be developed to enhance the experience beyond the increasingly bypassed printed page.

ASIFA Central's David Baker, recently retired from FSU, had developed a visual boat journey from the captain's deck perspective of a trip down the grand river in the early years of the lumber-based economy of Grand Rapids.

The editor had also developed a Flash-based game template for cities to insert specific digital assets representing lost landmarks. The mission for the players was to reconstruct these sites, discover items of local significance, while eluding the zombieified representations of local historic notables ("Zombies Ate My Breakfast" was the prototype, since abandoned with the deactivation of Flash for its security shortcomings - a warning to those depending on tech-heavy solutions to spacial perception-based projects).



## PAINTING WITH LIGHT: ARTISTIC EXPERIMENTS INTO THE USE OF VIRTUAL REALITY AS AN ANIMATION PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT

GERT WASTYN - STEVEN MALLIET - BART GEERTS

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### ABSTRACT

"While many researchers have examined the technical characteristics of using VR as a production environment for animation, its artistic potential has only sporadically been investigated. We want to contribute to

this line of thought through reflection on a number of expanded animation workshops organized in the context of the Painting With Light project. In this paper we use flow theory in order to discuss the experience of using VR as a 3D prototyping tool. Our findings suggest that this practice can add an improvisatory and co-creative dimension to animation."

#### Flow Theory Explained

"While there exists a lot of literature and research regarding the efficiency of designing in VR, few authors have addressed the flow state that occurs during designing and animating in VR. When a person is completely absorbed in his/her pursuits, one can refer to the mental state defined as 'flow'. Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote a seminal series of books on the subject, including *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (1996).

"Flow denotes a mental state in which an artist (or essentially any type of practitioner) is optimally concentrated. They perform as if they are in a dream, taking on the rules and rhythms of a game-like performance. In this state, the artist can perform very effectively and efficiently, but at the same time, also very intuitively and expressively (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Karsten (2010) adds to this that "Both participants experience changes in perceived control over their activity during flow.

"For both, flow is related to a feeling of less thinking and judgement while at the same time being intensely concentrated, captured in the sub-themes of "focused attention and diminished conscious control". Following this line of thought, it can be said that the flow state enables the mastery of the artists to be called upon instinctively, and therefore, more naturally.

"It is this type of deep concentration or self-forgetting that Tatiana Chemi describes as having a specific purpose when it comes to artistic processes. It helps trigger and guide the creation of ideas and concepts (Chemi, 2016).

"In order to be able to describe a state of 'flow', one or more of the following eight characteristics must be present, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990):

- (1) there is a clear goal
- (2) the person is in a state of concentration and works purposefully
- (3) the person is absorbed in the activity and forgets his/her sense of self
- (4) loss of time awareness
- (5) direct feedback on success or failure allowing room for adjustment

- (6) the activity is challenging but just exceeds the level of one's own skills
- (7) there is a sense of personal control over the situation
- (8) there is an intrinsic reward attached to the activity

"The flow state is often thought of as related to scenarios with a minimum or maximum effort requirement. A person may perform an activity so efficiently that no extra effort is required for it. The conditions for this state are hard to fulfil, and its main characteristics are: focus, absorption, engagement and efficiency. For these reasons the flow state is considered as a driving factor in creativity and innovation.

"Flow can occur in various scenarios: while playing games, working on a project or just surfing on the internet, one can find themselves in this optimal mental state. Game designers investigate flow to optimize game play. Jazz musician Butch Morris even devised a series of gestures to help fellow band members enter a flow state during improvisation sessions (Morris & Henderson, 1996)."

#### Flow State in VR

"A recent study with 42 undergraduate design students from Bilkent University, Turkey, found that the immersive aspect of virtual design environments had a positive influence on the participants' creative process (Obeid & Demerkan, 2020). This was concluded through observation of factors such as flow state and motivation, related to creativity.

"There additionally appeared to be a strong correlation between motivation and flow state and a weak (but significant) correlation between spatial ability and flow state.

"Almost all 57 students participating in this study reported experiencing a flow state in some form while playing the VR game."

#### Comment

So much of the potential of VR seems to be a corruption of the Joseph Campbell maxim, "Follow your bliss." Artists experience becoming lost in their work, just as the gamer can become lost in the proto-VR of a marathon run of Tetris. It becomes a challenge to not equate the creative process with the experiential one - the flow state here could just as easily become a "flow over" state, with immersion becoming a submersive, if not subversive, state. Ready Player One and Minority Report portray, as entertainment, the dark potential of a hypnotic audio-visual digital induction of societal schizophrenia.

More locally, Grand Rapids has had its own proto-immersive experience with some traveling shows featuring the inner universe of the mind of Van Gogh. Your editor is still waiting to see if his tickets were legitimate! Until then, he will repeatedly get lost in variations of computer solitaire when there are newsletters begging for an edit.



### **CONCRETE ABSTRACT: EXPLORING TACTILITY IN ABSTRACT ANIMATIONS FROM EARLY AVANT-GARDE FILMS TO CONTEMPORARY ARTWORKS**

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#### ABSTRACT

"After witnessing social chaos and the collapse of values at the beginning of the twentieth century, avant-garde artists insert new thought patterns and progressive aesthetic into the traditional perception of art.

"Being enthralled by the new film medium, former painters like Viking Eggeling, Walther Ruttmann and Hans Richter start to experiment with light in two-dimensional film formats, they animate lines, stripes, basic shapes, play with the foreground and the background, and, most important of all, they construct a temporality within the visual order of the screen.

"Viking Eggeling's *Symphonie Diagonale* (1921-24), Walther Ruttmann's *Opus I* (1921) and Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* (1921) show such temporality built in, which is caught by the idea of music as their titles suggest. These short abstract animation films attempt to discover the artistic possibilities of the new developing medium, film.

"Like the pioneer avant-garde abstract filmmakers, today's artists still seek to stimulate a new perception for a possible embodiment that will activate the sense of touch in the audience. Tactility, enhanced by the material, opens up a new network of spatio-temporal relationships in the viewer's consciousness and subjecthood...

"Through a selection of abstract animations, the materiality of the film image and the screening site will be elaborated upon according to the haptic features that are corporally embodied by the viewers. In the light of historical abstract animation, the aim is to dwell upon the dynamics of a continuous tendency to capture tactile instances to help bring forth the spatial resonances as well as

visualize and reedify the rhythmic passing of time.”

#### Comment

The strange relationship between Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter is worthy of research on its own - and it is certainly refreshing to see Walther Ruttmann's astonishing early work, with its intentionally composed accompaniment and hand tinting combining to create a fully mature presentation for abstract animated film.

Impressions of abstract animation are quite subjective, and the source material can make quite a difference in how audiences can appreciate, or depreciate, a film. Several collections have recently found excellent pre-restoration sources and have built libraries of digital transfers, many of which are available to the public (Treasures, More Treasures, the Kino Avant Garde series, and Unseen Cinema come to mind, among others).

Sirhay offers a wide array of print references as well with his survey:

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*Everything Goes: An Interview with Robert Breer*, *Artforum*, <https://www.artforum.com/print/201009/everything-goes-an-interview-with-robertbreer-26653>

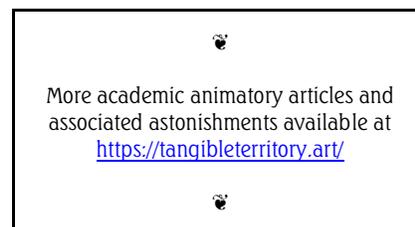
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Russett, Robert, and Starr, Cecile, *Experimental Animation, Origins of a New Art* (1976) Da Capto Press, featuring our own ASIFA Central member and 2022 President of ASIFA International, Deanna Morse, on page 23



#### HITTING WHERE IT HURTS: ABSURDITY AS AN ARTISTIC METHOD

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#### ABSTRACT

“This article frames absurdity as an artistic method related to the context of an artwork's making. The artworks introduced here are (very broadly) situated at the interface between animation and documentary. Their absurdity is not a matter of their content,

but is deeply inscribed in the process of their making. Though they do not explicitly address political questions, they strike at the heart of given power systems or established hierarchies and thus hit where it hurts. “Make it absurd!” is a way of transgressing standards and norms and thus undermining established power relations.

“The article offers close-readings of a small number of contemporary artworks that can be apprehended as stimulating examples of how absurdity as a method deploys its critical potential. As the examples demonstrate, disrupting a given context can be achieved in many ways:

“By “inflating” formal devices in order to subvert typical elements of televisual language from inside-out (House by Andy Birtwistle, Great Britain 2013);

“By rendering a source text (and not just any text!) literally unreadable by investing an enormous amount of time to its dismantling (‘On the Road’ by Jack Kerouac by Jorge Lorenzo, Mexico 2013);

“By hijacking a male masterpiece and placing the “copy” as well as the female appropriator at the same level as the “master” (A Movie by Jen Proctor by Jen Proctor, USA 2010);

“By demonstrating that the technique of animation itself bears the mark of the absurd (Anna Vasof's series of works, gathered under the headings of Non-stop Stop-motion and Muybridge's Disobedient Horses, Austria, 2017-);

“And finally, via a method called “slapstick avant-garde,” by launching an attack on purist self-restraint (Dont Know What by Thomas Renoldner, Austria 2019).”

#### Conclusion

“The five case studies gathered here establish a connection between absurdity and art, one that goes beyond their subject matter. Nothing would be easier than to imagine something like “absurdity in art,” on the same pattern as, for example, “the horse in art.”

“Instead, the focus lies on media practices that use absurdity as an artistic tool or method. Consequently, before elaborating on the works' textual and contextual meanings, particular attention has been paid to their making, to the operations and gestures involved.

“Making it absurd” is a way of transgressing standards and norms and thus undermining established power relations. As the examples have shown, disrupting a given context can be achieved in many ways.”

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### Comment

If the reader is able to get the chance, it is worth checking out the photos that accompany this article - the discussion on the Kerouac presentation shows how typing onto the black leader was used as a way to demonstrate two antiquated methods of communication - the typewriter and 35mm film stock being blended in order to create a new performance with a literal layering of imagery during presentation. The film reel supplants Kerouac's typewritten roll.

Also, Thomas looks absolutely great playing with a solitary chair.

In short, animators should be seen and absurd.



## DANCE, LONG EXPOSURE AND DRAWING: AN ABSURD MANIFESTO ABOUT THE FEMALE BODY

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## ABSTRACT

"This paper summarises the evolution and production process of *Kam*, a long-exposure pixilation/ 2D animation film with a unique aesthetic approach that took three years to formulate and complete due to an iterative-fragmented production schedule. *Kam*, which means "shaman" in old Turkish, was conceived as a response to the rise of conservative and misogynist official discourse in Turkey, and it features a woman's fire dance.

"For this film, Turkish dancer Sevinc Baltali's improvised performance was captured by the author using the technique of long-exposure photography.

"Condensing the motion of the dancer, the still frames created a flowing image on screen in which the dancer's body is sometimes hardly perceivable. The dance flow was then recreated to the music of Amolvac, an underground New York band featuring a modern interpretation of the tribal music. Finally, the manifesto of the film was reinforced by adding another layer, this time of primitive drawings by the author, on top of the images, creating a more pronounced expression of the anger and the rebellious energy of the female body.

"This article argues that the unique aesthetics of the film attained at the end of an iterative and fragmented production process allowed a multi-layered liminal space for meaning to emerge.

"By elaborating on the relationship between the aesthetic approach, the political stance and the production methodology of this film, this article aims to demonstrate how animation can create a visceral experience that highlights and communicates what Herzog (2010) defines as "ECSTATIC TRUTH."

Comment and Point of Departure  
Often, a symposium on theory that continues to the dissection of the subjects of creativity, humor, and artistic intent can become as entertaining as a trip to the dentist, but this spring visit via Zoom to Prague was continually enlightening, lively, and provided not only engaging discussions, but the added benefit of articles and reference links that seemed saturated in current terminologies used in the academic environment that could be useful for those in the midst of syllabi creation or grant preparation.

The original pdfs of these articles are available for download and more detailed review - and will lead to further lost moments in - what was that term? - "a state of flow."

Yr hmbl typst, JM - Edmore, June 2022