

Cécile Chevalier



Rendezvous (2012, RFID tag, Internet, moving image, lantern slides, photographs) by Cécile Chevalier

Untitled#21 (2012, MAX MSP/Jitter, moving image, sound) by Cécile Chevalier & Andrew Duff



In my research practice embodiment is considered as bodily perception within an orchestrated environment (the installation art work) as its stimuli to form and reform individual and collective memories or narrated self/ves.

In my installation work (Rendezvous & Untitled#21, 2012), the body of the audience/user is considered as part of the work, not as an object but as an extension of it. Merleau-Ponty (1964:5) states how "our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand on a instrument", without the body to question, to reposition, to engage, to perceive, the art work has no narrative.

According to Göran Sonesson (2007:87) "embodiment emerges as a problem within the philosophy of consciousness" as one needs to be aware of their body to recognise, interact within the environment it is placed.

However as Husserl (1952:231) points out "What I do not 'know', what in my experience, my imagining, thinking, doing, is not present to me as perceived, remembered, thought [...] will not 'influence' my mind. And what is not in my experience, be it ignored or implicitly - intentionally decided, does not motivate me even unconsciously". Here, Husserl clearly revoked any role for unconsciousness between and within mind, body and the environment.

The mind or psyche is formed of both consciousness and unconsciousness (Horizon, 2002) so is questioning the division between mind and body to also question how unconsciousness affects the body and how the body affects unconsciousness?

More recently, Chris Frith (2007:68) states in his book *Making up your Mind* that "these unconscious choices are just like Helmholtz's unconscious interferences. We do not perceive the object in front of our eyes until the brain has made it unconscious", it makes sense to acknowledge the unconscious as a key element in our interaction with the environment.

In relation to my installation work, Rendezvous, I used tangible technologies, however, the technology itself overrode the unconscious narrative between the user, the material and digital artefacts. The social

engagement was dominant, as further dialogue was needed to explaine how it worked. However in Untitled#21, discreet embodied technology was used, so the audience did not know that their body movement contributed to the altered visual narrative without being conscious - from the time this was explained, the audience would consciously perform movement to engage with their visual alteration and the work became a social environment once more.

References

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1964. *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. 1 Edition. Northwestern University Press.

Göran Sonesson, 2007. 'From the Meaning of Embodiment to the Embodiment of Meaning: A Study in Phenomenological Semiotics', *Body, Language and Mind: Volume 1: Embodiment (Cognitive Linguistic Research 35.1)*. Edition. Mouton de Gruyter.

Edmund Husserl, 1952. *Ideas*, George Allen & Unwin LTD; Ex - Lib edition

Thomas Fuchs, 2012. *Body Memory and the Unconscious*, Universitt Heidelberg

Horizon, 2009. *The Secret is You*, BBC, Director/Producer Dan Walker. Executive Producer Andrew Cohen.

Chris Frith, 2007. *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates Our Mental World*. 1 Edition. Wiley-Blackwell.