

It is with interest in exploring new methods of curating, specifically exhibition design, that I have consistently explored cinema as an affective medium with the potential to influence curatorial process. The growth of this research has stemmed from the limitations set by the traditions of white-cube design in contemporary gallery space and the affect this places on the artistic encounter. As I developed my artistic practice, I struggled in art school with making my photo-based and interactive work marketable. Meaning, it was a challenging task to create work that was critically stimulating, aesthetically interesting and conceptually sound but also a product to collect and exhibit. I challenged traditional methods of photographic display by printing small-scale silver prints, meant to be touched, passed around, housed in leather boxes, and experienced through an embodied interaction. Similar to many 1960s conceptual artists like On Kawara—practices that looked to transform the bounds of materiality by creating works that existed somewhere in between painting or photography and sculpture—the intention of this work was to

artworks through text and dialogue. This specific institutional frame greatly hinders the potential for spectators to encounter art with *feeling prior to discourse* because the way one moves through exhibition space and interacts with art is based on information rather than experience. I contend that the initial experience of feeling can lead to a more contemplative and critical understanding of artworks and their meanings. Now, of course, we know many artists, as well as curatorial agents, experiment and fracture the conventions of white-cube spaces and have been doing so for decades by developing experimental mediums, exhibiting new media, installation art, and moving-image— many examples of this are considered within this issue. However, I follow Lucy Steeds notion that the institutional frame of modernist exhibitions which utilize essay-like theoretical context is the medium through which most art becomes known (Steeds et al 2014, 13). For this purpose, I have been looking to consider new methodologies for what cultural critic and curator Mieke Bal conceives as curatorial framing, or producing reception that arrives through

ly affects further constitute the production of cognitive knowledge or thought – meaning that by experiencing affect and reflecting on experience, we learn and increase our knowledge and ability to perceive thus creating meaningful reflection (152). My research as looked to cinema as a guiding case study, to reflect on how the traditional conditions of exhibition design can be rethought to guide a more affective reception, develop a processual event, and focus importance of the spectator to build context. In particular, I look to media ecologist Adrian J. Ivkahiv's process-relational account of cinema and how the medium works to draw us into its dynamic world of thought.

According to Ivkahiv, the medium of cinema creates a composition of multiple worlds. In the first instance, a film creates its own objective lifelike existence (Ivkahiv 2013, ix). It creates places, happenings, and events that feel referential of what is real, ushering us to take a subjective part in its story (ix). The object-subject relationship that a film builds manifests into what Ivkahiv calls the film's life-world or its interactive composite of things that are lively with sensing reactions (ix). Sitting somewhere between mimics of reality and creations of imaginative cosmoes, cinema creates immersive spaces where we can reflect on the material, economic, and ecological objects that frame our lives, the social relationships that weave our political and personal character, and the humanity of our condition, past, present, and future. In order to drive this reflection, cinema must draw us into these worlds.

Ivkahiv contends that this attraction is due to cinematic experience – a relational unfolding of a film's material (spectacle), social (narrative), and perceptual (semiosis) elements (ix). Extending beyond traditional film theory and the psychology of cinema that argue for the immoral powers that cinema may enforce, such as the gaze, sociophilia, persuasion, or Lacanian tendencies, Ivkahiv tells us what cinema does and lays it out bare. Instead, from an ecological and perceptual standpoint, he shows us how cinema so adequately brings us in and makes us critically think, perceive, and feel. To start, cinema is rich with spectacle that which is physically immaterial yet conceptually material as it affects our bodies with intensity—these are the sounds and images that we feel as they hit our retinas and eardrums tingling down into our chests, cores, and reactive organs (stomach, heart, lungs, genitals) (Ivkahiv 2013, 58). The sounds include those of ambiance, explosions, concentrated breath, scores of string quartets, narration, melodies

of familiar songs—those ones we’ve heard on the radio, been shared through generations, found on our streaming sites and turn to when we need to grieve, or dance, or think of love. These sounds, the pause of these sounds, and even white noise always co-exist with image. Whether that image is photographic, animated, or digitally conceived they exist through duration, sequentiality, and movement. They are those photos and clips sourced directly from our news media, compounded takes of famous faces, scenes of bright and unnatural colour, and settings of familiar domestic space. This co-existence between image and sound work through reaction and relational cooperation to build a film's story, its social index, and unfolding events of it’s narrative that keeps us hooked and spark our ability to perceive (Ivakhiv 2013, 59). Finally, through an enacted reception of a film’s sounds, images, and events, we are able to perceive and understand a film’s meaning through semiosis. Semiosis works to bring viewers into an inquiry of the material and social world that exists both in the film and reality (Ivakhiv 2013, 60). Through this connection between the reality of the film world and the real world, we are able to understand a film and it’s purpose— the lessons it attempts to teach, the considerations it wants us to believe, and the meaning that it works to give our lives. With the reception of cinema, a viewer is a conditional force in the creation of meaning. One brings their own pre-conditioned understanding, embodied reactions, and the ability to cognitively relate all of the elements of film together in order to generate meaning. In cinema, cinematic experience helps a viewer through the process of perception.

As I see it, curatorial process can experiment with cinematic forms to frame the experience of visual and media art. Ivakhiv’s element of spectacle comes into being through the incorporation of affective media. Auditory elements, digital images, ranges in lighting, environmental set design, incorporation of ready-made objects, and interactive media can exist within the space between artworks to initiate this unfolding perception of art. In addition, taking inspiration from the way cinema’s images move into one another, curator’s can foresee the act of physically connecting artworks, creating installations where multiple artworks touch and materially react with one another. Through the use of media as a way to connect artworks together, one is drawn *through* the ‘narrative’ of an exhibition due to their embodied response and engaged interest. These different examples of media, inspired from cinematic devices work to encourage the spectator with experiential information, drawing and guiding them through the complex notions of

artworks. Whereas the modernist exhibition complex gives meaning to artworks immediately, this process suspends the act of perception allowing spectators the chance to implement their own context as part of the process. The encounter of art becomes something similar to the words of Susan Sontag: “an experience in the form or style of knowing something, rather than knowledge of something (like a fact or moral judgement) in itself (Filipovic et Hofmann 2013, 75). Framing artworks in this way could raise the awareness of art’s ability to help viewers consider

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About the Author

Mallory A. Gemmel is an emerging writer and curator from Vancouver, Canada. She is a current MA in Comparative Media Arts Candidate at Simon Fraser University. In 2016, she acquired a BFA in Photography and Curatorial Studies at Emily Carr University where she focused on notions of experience — gaining a tendency to believe in a metering of veracity, questioning the truths of the world through making photographs, discussing with peers, and writing. As an arts practitioner, she has taken on numerous roles including archivist, programming assistant, and collective member, interning at various institutions in Vancouver. Her recent research focuses on the perceptual and affective process of moving-image and cinema, while also contemplating the contemporary conditions that surround curatorial practice.