

The Expanded Mirror thesis abstract

Introspective artist-curator practice is a synthesis of roles taking place in the gap between studio and exhibition space; between giving and receiving information. The praxis functions within instability, where tensions between control of the project collide with the creative process of the artist and what the viewer brings to the situation. This instability is a necessary condition of the practice and should be regarded positively, because new meaning emerges from these shifting positions. This thesis presents an alternative analysis of the praxis. It shows how the inherent autobiographical condition of the praxis can form links with dialectical seeing and the intuitive by capturing ephemeral traces of fragmented and projected memory. The research begins to formulate the philosophical basis for thinking about this type of praxis. It asks, how repetition, indexical trace and fragmentation function as simulacral drivers to influence the self-reflective communications of the introspective artist-curator.

I made numerous artworks, curated two exhibitions and undertook a year-long research residency at The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge to answer this question. Within these projects I held the roles of artist, curator, and viewer. From these three positions, I glimpsed the influence of the simulacrum at work in an entangled relationship to introspective artist-curator practice, where situations were never informed or defined by the simulacrum, but always transformed by its ability to raise questions and pose problems. A bespoke methodology of mirroring was used to reflect creative studio concerns onto curatorial strategies and the approach to writing the thesis. These in turn reflected in the opposite direction creating striated and refracted displacements where it was possible to observe the depths of the Deleuzian simulacral modalities within the research. During the residency, intuitive dialectical seeing played a significant part in selecting objects to work with, and in creative alterations thereafter. I found visual clues in the original works, along with my own memories and desires, activated my seeing to form the fantasy images playing in my mind as I strolled through the museum galleries; and later at my computer where I altered the images I took with my mobile phone.

KEYWORDS: Self-reflective communication, introspective artist-curator practice, simulacra, repetition, indexical trace, fragmentation, projected memory, dialectical seeing, intuitive methodologies