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From Monitor to Gallery Space – Spatialisation of the Moving Image in Finnish Video Art in the 1990s

Kati Kivinen // Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Finnish National Gallery

The outbreak into space

One of the main trends in both the video art and photography of the 1990s is related to spatial works of art rapidly becoming more common in both domestic and international contemporary art. In video art, the projected and multi-screen video installation quickly replaced earlier sculptural video installation art, which still depended on monitors as the image source. In the video art of the 1990s, the partner in dialogue was more often cinema rather than television, and the emphasis shifted from the political video art of the 1970s, which had used TV aesthetics, to more experiential video art that returned to cinema aesthetics (Iles 2003; Kotz 2005/2008). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, photography turned to installation's new ways of presenting and interpreting in an effort to break away from the documentary tradition, and to pursue the fine art dimension of photography in particular (Rinne 1997, 11; Elovirta 1999, 199–201).

The new spatial trends in the field of art soon also inspired various attempts to compartmentalize and define the new spatial forms of expression in both moving image and photography. At the turn of the millennium, terms such as *gallery film*, used in Anglo-American discourse, and *cinéma d'exposition* (cinema of exhibition), based on French research, established their presence in the discourse on spatial forms of the moving image, while in photography, the discussion was situated somewhere between the points of fine art photography and fine arts. In Finland, these fields had only just started to move towards one another at the beginning of the 1990s. The outbreak of photography into space mainly took place through conceptual art, when the photograph – no longer merely a pure aesthetic object, but now a part of a process – broke out of its frame, expanding the traditional boundaries of the medium and seeking to find new ways and forms for the expression traditionally imposed on it (Hietaharju 1992). Later, photography also showed signs of moving towards *cinematic representation* in the works of significant photographers of the 1990s such as Jeff Wall and Andreas Gursky. One of that decade's central phenomena in photography became the monumental 'cinematic tableaux', which, in art-historian Liz Kotz's opinion, brought together the high culture aspirations of painting and the pop culture appeal of Hollywood (Kotz 2005, 105).

This development started around the same time in both art forms; however, in photography, it withered quickly. In Finnish art large-scale projected video installations – often in multi-screen format – had great exposure at the turn of the millennium in both domestic and international exhibitions, and were often accompanied by

Finnish photography. The significant difference was, however, that coming into the new millennium, photography abandoned installations and ‘returned to the walls’. Director of the Finnish Museum of Photography Elina Heikka sees signs of ‘business economic rationality’ in this development, which, in the internationalization of the art world, shuns the more experimental forms of art and favours easily movable pieces that can be placed in different kinds of spaces (Heikka 2004).

Although I have introduced photographic installations and moving image installations together, the aim of this article is to discuss the era of the spatialized moving image, also called gallery film, which began in Finnish video art in the 1990s. I will introduce the different sides of the international discussion and interpret them in relation to the Finnish moving image art of the 1990s. My article is based on the supposition that video installations have a significant role in both stabilizing and internationalizing Finnish video art. I will describe how video’s spatial representation form – the video installation – brought video art, still considered marginal in the 1980s, to the foreground in Finnish fine arts and into institutions, from video festivals to museum exhibitions and collections. I will also examine how video art – together with photography – had a strong role in making Finnish contemporary art international towards the end of the 1990s.

Chop-chop! Out of the margins and into museums

Although video art was still fairly undiscovered and marginal in Finland in the 1980s, towards the end of the decade it had become an established, recognized, and approved art form (Veiteberg 1990, 10; Eerikäinen 1993, 20; Kivirinta & Rossi 1991, 18). Nevertheless, video art was still mostly exhibited at various video festivals and events rather than in museums and galleries. In Finland, some of the important venues for exhibiting early video art included the Kuopio Video Festival (1989–1990) and Lahti AV-Biennale (1984–1997), as well as the Helsinki-based MuuMediaFestivaali (1989–1998), which continued where Kuopio Video Festival had left off. However, as the 1990s progressed, the focal point of MuuMediaFestivaali quickly moved to newer media art, interactive installations, and web art, thus ending ‘the era of video art as the messiah of the new audiovisual language and democratizer of media culture’ in the general approval of the fine arts scene, to quote artist and scholar Kari Yli-Annala’s rather dramatic expression (Yli-Annala 1998, 114–115). Video art did not reach the curricula of art schools until the beginning of 1990s, when a media art department, led by Professor Lauri Anttila, was founded at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts.

The situation changed rapidly in the mid-1990s, both in the international field and in Finland. Large-scale and projected moving image installations suddenly made their appearance in the world’s art museums and mega exhibitions, making video art very popular and a central element in fine arts (Kotz 2005, 101–102). Some discourses have even suggested that this was when large-scale ‘cinematic projection practices’ replaced painting and sculpture as the dominant forms of contemporary art (Leighton 2008, 7). This change was seen on a smaller scale at the beginning of the 1990s in the United States, where the new spatial trend of video art, which attracted a lot of attention, as well as multimedia in general, entered the field of fine arts (Kotz 2005, 103).

This process of spatializing the moving image was promoted through the rapid development and improved availability of the technology needed both to exhibit and create works of video art throughout the 1990s. Improved projection possibilities freed the moving image from the confined medium of a TV monitor by enlarging it to a scale closer to movie screens. The similarity to TV aesthetics and democracy associated with works of video art in the 1980s was replaced in the 1990s by a connection to film aesthetics and endlessly expanding demands for space and equipment (Iles 2003, 131). The changes brought about by the developments in the technology used to show the moving image were starting to stand out in art exhibitions; according to Kotz, single-channel works of video art had often been exhibited separately, restricted to their own spaces, away from museums’ main exhibition spaces, because the video monitor had been deemed a distracting and unrepresentable object in a gallery space – something that wrongly diverts viewers’ thoughts to the television in the corner of the living room and the world it conveys. The new, space-demanding, and often aesthetically more imposing projected film and video installations, on the other hand, immediately found their place in museums’ main gallery spaces alongside sculptures, objects, and paintings (Kotz 2005, 101–115; Kotz 2008, 371–358). The trend has not been merely aesthetic, however; the change has affected museum visits in terms of pedagogy and time use as well.

From 'spookers' to institutionalized entertainers

As early as 1990, Norwegian art-historian Jorunn Veiteberg stated in his article 'VT for and against TV' that for [Scandinavian] video art, working with installations meant leaving 'no-man's land' (Veiteberg 1990, 10–13). Around the same time, Finnish media researcher Erkki Huhtamo wrote about a similar change: for him, the impressive entry of video installations into museums, large exhibitions, and public collections was a sign of its coming of age, but also a sign it was evolving from alternative art to bourgeois museum art (Huhtamo 1990, 18–20).

Video art, which was a fairly young art form in Finland, quickly adapted to this international change. The video installation had established its status in the Finnish art scene towards the end of the 1990s, increasing in visibility outside the country as well, partly due to the personal success of Eija-Liisa Ahtila. However, media art, broadly defined, together with photography, was the most internationally visible form of Finnish art and the number one art export at the turn of the millennium. The majority of the Finnish artists featured in international exhibitions at this time were photographers and media artists.

When, after decades of waiting and preparation, the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma finally opened in Helsinki in 1998, the 10th anniversary programme guide for the MuuMediaFestivaali media art festival discussed the development of the Finnish media art scene. It speculated about the role of media art – including video art – in its journey from the margins to the centre of the fine arts scene, from festivals to museums. A number of expectations were directed at the new Kiasma museum as the arena for media art, the 'topical living room of electronic art' (Mäkelä A. 2008, 246). This 'other art', emerging from the sidelines of the art world and 'jeopardizing the mental security of the conservative art crowd', became part of the dominant order; the possibility of alternative counter-art was lost as 'the spookers' of the art scene suddenly gained widespread acceptance (Eerikäinen 1993, 20).

However, video art's coming of age and move from the margins to museums did not meet with unreserved admiration in the Finnish fine arts scene. Canonizing this art form was seen to be doing away with the labels of alternative art and counter-art and art of opposition that it had been associated with in the 1980s; the *arte povera* of 1980s video art had, in some critics' views, in the 1990s become opera where technology replaced substance and idea (Eerikäinen 1993, 22). My personal observation is that in the light of today's context, it seems that the technology-related discussion mainly concerned the media art of the 1990s, and interactive and web art in particular, whereas the discussion concerning video art of the 1990s, including its spatial representations, primarily focused on the content of the works of art.

During the 10th anniversary of MuuMediaFestivaali, some people expressed concerns over video artists wrongly turning to the installation form in an effort to attract new – and possibly bigger – audiences and better access to museums and galleries. The artist Teemu Mäki, who has himself used video, mainly in single-channel works documenting performances, stated his view on the development:

In my opinion, video art has reacted to its problems of spreading by finding comfort in a mother: very few new single-channel works are created; artists prefer the installation form to avoid a doomed competition with TV and movie theatre bulk – and to benefit from the PR aura of art museums (I am not saying that this applies to all installations). (Mäki 1998, 8)

The evolution of moving image forms towards space was partly considered an unwanted and populist development that did not seem to develop the audiovisual language of video art as part of the fine arts scene. From today's perspective this sounds slightly odd, since it was installation that brought video art to the fine arts scene as a part of the wider spectrum of contemporary fine art. It is almost as if changing the artist's medium from single-channel video work to comprehensive spatial moving image installation inevitably purged the work of an idea and deeper substance.



Eija-Liisa Ahtila, *Where Is Where?*, 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Pirje Mykkänen.



Heli Rekula, *Skein*, 2000, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Petri Virtanen.

Mäki's critique concerning the form of video installation perhaps has a sounding board in the writings of British researcher Julian Stallabrass, who wrote about 1990s installation art. In his book *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art* (2004), Stallabrass analyses the arrival of installations to the hub of the 1990s art scene. He also suggests that one reason behind the art form's current popularity and it becoming more common is that nowadays installation is often seen as art's way of vying against mass culture for attention. Unlike the installation art of the 1960s and 1970s – which was largely born out of the institutional criticism of artists in the United States – the installations of the 1990s are often no longer counter-art, but rather a kind of art of spectacle that works its way into the hub of the art world, into museum exhibitions and international mega exhibitions, and competes with mass culture for the public's attention (Stallabrass 2004, 24–27, 92–95).

The term 'installation' itself implies that the artist constructs the work in a particular, designated space but also that this art form typically *requires* a museum, a gallery, or another institution established in portraying art. Thus the existence of installation – and a moving image installation in particular – as an art form is dependent on museums or other similar exhibition institutions that facilitate its presentation in terms of space and technology, and often also financially. Even though Stallabrass's view of 1990s installation art as the challenger of mass culture and, in many ways, as an exclusive art form, seems somewhat cynical, it is true that his observations concerning the installation's dependency on museums and art institutions are very accurate: installations – especially multi-channel moving image installations – are usually fairly expensive works of art for both the artists and museums to produce and exhibit (Stallabrass 2004, 24–27). This issue was recently brought up in media discussions prompted by the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma's acquisition of Eija-Liisa Ahtila's large-scale video installation *Missä on Missä?* (Where is Where?) (2008). Newspaper articles and comments speculated about the price and exhibition schedule in Finland, as well as the significance of the acquisition. However, the basis of the installation, the reasons behind its acquisition, and the spatial and technical requirements were often not discussed in great detail (e.g. Mäkinen, HS 6/5/2009; Heinänen, HS 9/5/2009; Mustaranta, HS 27/12/2009).

It has been said that over the course of the 1990s, galleries became the alternative for exhibiting the moving image: a sanctuary even, according to some interpretations, where the moving image could be freer and more experimental, much like a counterforce to the products of mainstream film industry (e.g. Darke 2000, 159; also Stemmerich 2008, 430–443 and Frohne 2008, 365). The positive attitude of art institutions in relation to moving image installations – as well as various other media art installations – has partly been credited to the media-oriented exhibition of these works of art, which is believed to appeal to different kinds of audiences, not solely to the traditional art museum audience. According to Belgian curator and video art researcher Chris Dercon, for example, works of art that make use of media-oriented presentation use techniques from the entertainment industry and communications that are already familiar to the audience, thus serving as an interesting starting point when encountered in a new context such as a museum exhibition (Dercon 2000, 28–31). In my opinion, one of the contributing factors must be the discussion concerning the art museum institution's transformation in the 1980s and 1990s from the citadel of high art and haven of expert spectatorship to cultural centre or mega museum that offers not only exhibitions, but other social, cultural, and commercial services such as cafés and book shops. In this 'popular twist', the focus of the art museum institution shifted and the museum changed its role from an educational institution to a socially-oriented experience where the physical and psychological art experience replaced the distant and fundamentally intellectual reception and interpretation of art based on expertise (Dercon 2000b, 28–31; Foster *et al.* 2004, 656; Levin 1983, 57; Zoller 2007, 218; Serota 2000, 16–17).

From ethics back to aesthetics and experientialism

In 1990, media researcher Erkki Huhtamo compiled 'Twenty fragmentary thoughts about video installation' for the exhibition catalogue of 'Interface – Kohtauspinta', a Nordic video installation exhibition. According to Huhtamo, 'video installation is the material, spatial, and "abiding" dimension of video art,' the immaterial nature of which has become both 'a blessing' and 'a curse' for the video artist (Huhtamo 1990, 18–20). The advantage of the tape format is its relatively easy and low-cost portability – it can be put in an envelope, for example. Nevertheless, by the early 1990s it still had not become an item for collection or investment that museums or private collectors would have acquired in significant quantities (Eerikäinen 1993/2007, 99). Between 1960 and 1994, for example,

the Finnish National Gallery's the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma had accumulated a collection of 55 works catalogued under the main category of media art, including video- and film-based works of art, among others. Although the Kiasma collection had grown to 325 media art works by 2008, it still paled in comparison with the Centre Pompidou's media art collection, which in 2006 consisted of more than 1,000 media art works (<http://kokoelmat.fng.fi>; Aarnio 2008; Van Assche 2006, 12). According to Huhtamo, the installation provides the immaterial video image with 'a tangible frame' that fixes it to a time and a space. Thus, it returns 'the aura of a unique art object' or at least *a simulation* of such, to video art and works as a counterforce to the aesthetics of disappearance that threatens video tape art (Huhtamo 1990, 18–20; Benjamin 1936/1989, 130; Virilio 1980/1994).

Now, 20 years on, Huhtamo's ideas seem to echo the 1980s machine and technology craze, although it is nonetheless significant that they focus on the nature of video installation as an interactive art form that requires presence, much like the classic article on the poetics of video installation, 'The Body, the Image, and the Space-in-Between: Video Installation Art' (1990; 1998, 155–177), by American media theorist Margaret Morse and published the same year as Huhtamo's text (1990, 18–20). Like Morse, Huhtamo emphasises the fact that a video installation becomes real only through the actions of the person who approaches it and experiences it first-hand: 'One has to travel to the video installation. [...] As a rule an entrance fee has to be paid' (Huhtamo 1990, 18).

From this point of view, it seems that the artist's role in this process is primarily to create favourable conditions for the installation and its recipient to meet and interact. In her article, Morse writes that at the beginning of the 1990s – when her text was written – a scholar researching and analysing video installation art lacked the appropriate vocabulary to describe in words the video's spatial dimensions, *kinaesthetic experiences*, so to speak, which are closely related to learning through the body and space relation. According to Morse, this kind of learning could be referred to as *being inside pictures*, which is comparable to the process of reading literature or the process of seeing art in pictures. The different elements of the work of art, such as various visual, sculptural, kinaesthetic, auditory, and linguistic representations, actually gain their meaning in the space surrounding the work of art and through the moving viewer. In her effort to describe how the recipient experiences the encounter with the video installation, Morse sets down hypotheses concerning the poetics of video installations using a very phenomenological method. For example, she outlines the prerequisites for the existence of an art form by describing the image/body relationship between the work of art and its recipient, and thematises the different levels of video installation expression as a temporal and experiential passage. In her view, the space and time strategies of a video installation lead the viewer into a *kinaesthetic experience* that is different from the viewing experience of a static art object, such as a painting or a sculpture. In video installation, we move amid the images and with them, we share their space and thus become performers or, as Morse suggests, *visitors* participating in the image space of the installation with our physical presence. Her view is that the art form is no longer about the visual, but rather the relationship between the moving images and the visitor's body, as well as the space and time continuum, the so-called *space-in-between*, of the bodies and shapes (Morse 1998, 155–177).

Morse's early view of the video installation as a temporary art form that becomes real only through experience opposes Julian Stallabrass's interpretation of the 1990s installation as an art product or consumer object.

According to Morse's Utopian interpretation, video installation, which is beyond recording and copying, is counter-art that eludes art production models. Morse's perception is more suited to early video installations, whereas in the early 21st century, contemporary art video installations have become an art product – although perhaps the art institutions' art product rather than private art buyers' consumer object. Video installations have not, however, lost their experientialism or the need for the recipient's presence in the process. On the contrary, these have turned into an advantage for the video installation in today's art market that emphasises the experiential nature of art.

Towards cinematic aesthetics

Spatial issues became central in 1990s video art, not for the first time, but for very different reasons than in previous decades. In the article 'Video and Film Space' (2000, 252–262), by Chrissie Iles, who has studied the history of video and film installations, the history of moving image installations is divided into three clearly separate phases in relation to the art work's space. Iles calls the first phase *the performative phase*, which occurred in the

early times of video art history, the 1960s and early 1970s (Iles 2000, 252). The conceptually-oriented video installations of the performative phase are characterised by the abundant use of real-time video image and surveillance cameras, for example in so-called *surveillance art* installations (Rush 1999, 120–124), which aimed to challenge the passive spectator to become an active and performing actor whose presence and participation in the art work was a key component in the existence of the art work.

Iles calls the second phase of the history of moving image installations *the sculptural phase*, which made the video monitor standard material in video installations (e.g. Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Shigeo Kubota). The monitor was often used as a media sculpture that was intentionally placed in various formations – either free-standing or lying on the floor – or otherwise juxtaposed with the living room context in order to dull the associations with the TV monitor's everyday use as a familiar living room accessory (Iles 2000, 252–262). An image confined to the video monitor would remain the basis of video installation until the 1980s, as projection technology was yet to come. The same applied to Finland, where in the 1980s video art experienced simultaneously what Iles called the performative phase and the sculptural phase. In its early stages, video was very much a part of other arts, performance and process arts in particular, as early Finnish video art works were typically different kinds of recordings of artistic processes and acts (e.g. Turppi-ryhmä and Homo \$). (E.g. Tarkka 1990; Eerikäinen 1993/2007, 84; Erkkilä 2008, 50–64.) In this sense, Finnish video art followed the same trajectory as, for example, American video art had done almost 20 years earlier. The pioneer in both video art and video installation in Finland was Marikki Hakola (b. 1960). Hakola used video monitors to build large-scale installations, such as the 16-monitor video wall installation *Milena-Distanz* (1992) based on Kaija Saariaho's composition *Stilleben* (1988). In their efforts to produce ever bigger image sizes, artists often ended up using monitors to mount video walls that were in different shapes and occasionally very large. They used several connected video monitors mounted on top of one another and next to each other.

Iles calls the ongoing phase that started in the 1990s *the new cinematic aesthetic in video*, which focuses on spatial projection of the moving image, the fragmentation of shape and content facilitated by new technology, as well as the viewer's meaningful role as the story's reorganizer and reassembler. Within the cinematic aesthetic phase, artists study, inventory, disassemble, edit, reinterpret, isolate, and broaden the audiovisual narrative and its different elements made familiar by cinema (Iles 2000, 252). At the same time, the early video art of the 1960s and the 1970s and the experimental cinema of that period, also experienced a renaissance when they were explored with a precision that would rival archaeological research (Zoller 2007, 19–20). The results of these explorations were portrayed in numerous museum exhibitions that studied the roots of the moving image as a part of the fine arts field and strived to capture a version of the works of the past decades that was as authentic and original as possible. During that period came the realization that what had been considered the newcomer of the fine arts field in the 1990s was maybe not as new and unprecedented as it had first seemed.

In the cinematic aesthetic phase, besides the recipient of the art work, the central element of moving image installation was *projection*. In her article 'Video Projection – The Space Between the Screens' (2005, 101–115; 2008, 371–385), Kotz stresses how the use of projection techniques makes it possible to join a space, an image, and a subject, and how the relationships between the viewer, the projected moving image, the architectural space, and time can be observed in many different ways in projected moving image installations. According to Kotz, the video projection that had debuted at the end of the 1960s re-emerged at the beginning of the 1990s when New York gallery exhibitions started to exhibit spatial and sculptural moving image installations. These works of art, such as the double-image installation *Hors-champs* (1992) by Canadian artist Stan Douglas, took projection from the traditional movie theatre format and its ways of viewing, to novel, more active, and changing ways of viewing.

One of the first artists to work with the projected and spatialized video image in Finland was Marjatta Oja (b. 1962), who studied painting at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, and also studied in Italy. Oja's discreet and unassuming moving image installations – or situational sculptures, as she calls them – are normally composed of images projected on elements placed in a space or on different surfaces in a space, creating a situation where the moving image, the space, and the viewer meet (Oja 2006, 56). One of the earliest works that placed several projected video images side by side was by Heli Rekula (b. 1963): the *split screen* video installation *Hotelli* (1991/2005), which was also the artist's diploma work from Lahti Institute of Design (Rekula 2008). The setting for the story, filmed on 16mm black-and-white film, is a slightly dingy

hotel where various types of people are staying. The format of the art work – two large video projections side by side in a dark room – brings to mind the split-screen technique used in films and TV series in the 1950s and again in recent years. This technique allows for the simultaneous portrayal of two or more events or spaces. The split image enables the building of tension by showing simultaneous events occurring in different places. The multi-image installation established its position in Finnish moving image art in the mid-1990s largely due to Eija-Liisa Ahtila's works, such as *Jos 6 ois 9* (If 6 was 9) (1995), *Tänään* (Today) (1996), and *Lohdutusseremonia* (Consolation Service) (1999).

Kotz interprets video installation art's early entanglement with the TV monitor as suppressed trauma that was not truly released until projection technology developed in the 1990s. Since then, a significant portion of moving image art has increasingly turned toward *cinematic expression*, both in form and in content. In the current art context, video and film as technical media are not significant as such, but rather incidental and efficient tools for delivering images and stories in the desired manner. According to Kotz, this results in emphasising projection's significance as the artist's proper medium, which is facilitated by either video or film as technical aids. Projection itself as a material for an art work is seductively immaterial in nature, as projected image both is and is not there (Kotz 2005, 101–115; 2008, 371–385).

Studying the era of gallery film

Moving image installations in contemporary fine arts use cinema as raw material for both subjects and structures and expand the traditional perception of cinema as a medium in many different ways. In 2000, the French art publication *Art Press* published a themed issue that tackled questions of *cinéma d'autre* (other cinema), which has also been called gallery film or *cinéma d'exposition* (cinema of exhibition). 'Other cinema' is a term used by French film historian and theorist Raymond Bellour to describe those spatial moving image art works that are to some extent like cinema, resemble it closely, or refer to it. In his article 'Querelle des dispositifs' ('The Battle of the Images', 2000), Bellour studies the moving image installation's relationship to cinema. He describes how cinematic expression transforms itself in a spatial moving image installation when it takes possession of the exhibition space with 'a different kind of intensity' than a traditional movie theatre film. Even though works categorized as belonging to the phenomenon Bellour called 'other cinema' have inherited the 'original dual calling' of cinema to both tell a tale and document reality, they also reformulate the traditionally cinema-related narrative forms and ways of presenting in which cinema's power of expression has been rooted. The separation of moving image installations from traditional forms of cinema is most visible in, for example, the multiplication of the image, the redefining of a projection (when a projection surface can be both the wall and the ceiling of an exhibition space), the variety of materials, and the spatialisation process of images where image compositions are often positioned in the exhibition space in a three-dimensional set-up (Bellour 2000b, 48–52).

Bellour ends up with five different types in his efforts to specify the various spatial forms of the moving image installation, described in his article 'Of an Other Cinema' (2003, 39–61). These cover a significant part of the presentation forms of moving image installations in contemporary fine arts. These are: *the wall*, *the room*, *the series*, *screens everywhere*, and *the projection*. Of these forms, projection most resembles the traditional form of screening a film in a movie theatre, one large-scale projection in an exhibition space (e.g. Salla Tykkä and Matthew Barney). Various large-scale monitor walls or video walls, as in 1980s video art, best describe the type Bellour calls 'the wall' (e.g. Nam June Paik or Marikki Hakola). Screens everywhere, a kind of universal video screen, can mean that any surface in the exhibition space is a potential projection surface for the image (cf. Wik 2001, 145), a scenario that is probably least like the traditional way of screening a film (e.g. Pipilotti Rist and Marjatta Oja's video environments and 'situational sculptures'). The most common types in today's moving image art, however, are the series of screens and the room with several screens – either as a wide panorama (e.g. Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Anu Pennanen or Isaac Julien) or as an image space that encloses the viewer (e.g. Minna Rainio & Mark Roberts, Doug Aitken or Kutlug Ataman) – that form the external structure of the art work. As a point of reference for these forms, Bellour mentions the early experimentalist of French cinematic history, the film director Abel Gance whose 'polyvision' experiment attempted to break the 'monologous nature' of the screen (Bellour 2003, 52). However, Bellour's categorization describes the spatial form of the works on a rather superficial level by using the kind of

moving image forms that have been in general use in fine arts for the last 20 years or more. The viewer remains meaningful in this categorization, which focuses largely on the viewer's position.

French art-historian Jean-Christophe Royoux shares Bellour's uncertainty, as can be seen in his article 'Cinéma d'exposition: L'espace de la durée (Cinema as Exhibition, Duration as Space)' (2000, 36–41), where he ponders in which category the spatial and cinematic experiences (*expériences cinématographiques*) of moving image should be placed – or not be placed. Royoux agrees that works categorized as other cinema suggest new methods for cinematic narrative, methods that better facilitate active interaction between the viewer and the work than does traditional (movie theatre) cinema. Instead of the term *cinéma d'autre* launched by Bellour, however, Royoux uses the term *cinéma d'exposition* or 'exhibition of cinema' (Royoux 2000, 36–41; 1993 and 2003). He sees the *cinéma d'exposition* phenomenon as an interface between cinema and theatre, where the stage and viewers meet. Through this process, the viewer becomes an actor who is no longer restricted by the particular way of viewing that is imposed by the work or its presentation. Instead, they can engage in an improvised discourse with the work of art. Royoux goes as far as to call the works of art pertaining to the cinema of exhibition phenomenon a new art form, a *medium*, that was born over the course of the 1990s with these works (Royoux 1993, 68 and 2000, 41; also Van Assche 2003, 94–99). If we were to follow and summarize Royoux's thoughts, *cinéma d'exposition* is a *catalyst* of sorts, creating new kinds of narrative modalities which, in turn, facilitate a work's existence as a *medium* between the author and the recipient – a structure that activates the experience and reception process of the work. The intensity of the work rises from the separation where it thrusts into space the elements that have traditionally formed the narrative structure of cinema, often focusing on just one particular constituent.

The various articles in *Art Press* magazine's themed issue (no. 262/2000) reveal the confusion caused by moving image installations for researchers of both fine arts and moving image at the turn of the millennium. Both cinema theorists and art historians wonder in their articles if these works belong to cinema or installation art, or perhaps some kind of *alternative cinema*. Or is this a completely new genre that requires a category of its own? Is this a passing trend in art, or a more rooted phenomenon that builds on new methods and forms of presentation and on more multifold aesthetic questions? How can this newcomer be defined and positioned on the axis between traditional cinema and fine arts?

When reading these ponderings by French scholars, I cannot help but wonder if these moving image installations really should be compared to cinema. After all, art history is full of examples of how spatial-temporal impressions can be achieved with forms other than just film and video techniques. These include carefully rhythmically hanging, which creates links between images suggesting a certain way of reading or a narrative, and hanging images in diptychs or triptychs. I am, however, inclined to believe that moving image installations are in many ways indebted to cinema and the imagery and narrative solutions it offers. The moving image installations of contemporary fine arts have adopted cinema's ability to create seductive images, in a way making a virtue out of what has been condemned in the critique of popular film. But moving image installations do not just make use of cinema's popular illusionary effects, they also reinterpret them, sometimes allowing the viewer to submerge themselves in the world portrayed by the images, sometimes preventing that process by using various distancing techniques, for example by directly addressing the viewer as in Pekka Niskanen's and Eija-Liisa Ahtila's works. The familiar structures and narrative techniques of cinema are defamiliarised and the viewer is forced to work what they have seen over and over again when it fails to meet the expectations set by the viewer who perhaps bases their estimates on a general model of audiovisual narrative and various audiovisual representations. These works bring the structure of cinema into the museum space. By adopting and recycling the formal and functional structures of cinema, they create a freer narrative time-space, which, by nature, allows the viewer to have greater autonomy; in the space, the viewer meets a work that is in progress, not yet ready, not predetermined, but a suggestion or a framework for the event and the encounter. For artists working with moving image installations, cinema as a *medium* is not a permanent and unchangeable monolithic object, but rather a spectrum within which new kinds of montage, new kinds of time structures, and new opportunities are produced (Moisdon-Trembley 2003, 80).

Creating art using techniques other than the most familiar ones

At the beginning of the 1990s, the versatile use of image was still an obvious choice in both Finnish photography and video art. The absolute value of image was lost when it started to acquire its significance more and more through space and context. An art object with set limits was transformed into a spatially and temporally changing spectacle that was complemented by the recipients' interpretation (Elovirta 1999, 199; Fried 1992, 822–834). As I stated at the beginning of this article, this interesting progression ended quickly in photography. In moving image art, spatial works had strong involvement in internationalizing Finnish fine arts, but in photography, the experimental stage of installation was sadly cut short. It would have been interesting to see where photographic installation would have developed by the turn of the millennium had this development followed a slightly different course.

In moving image art, challenging the techniques traditionally thought of as 'the most familiar' (Rinne 1997, 9) to video art with spatial forms that challenge the traditional audiovisual narrative proved – regardless of suspicions – a worthwhile choice. Moving image art following the development of its ways of presenting had to, in a way, leave behind video art's early television aesthetics and head towards new ways of expression that also seemed better to correspond with the general trends of the art field, which emphasised art's experiential and even spectacular nature.

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