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## An Empathetic Space

*A study on the creation of empathy when experiencing a total installation*

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## Abstract

Title: *An Empathetic Space*

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The technological development has provided the art scene with many new opportunities of including the spectator as an active part of an artwork. Moreover, one could argue that some artworks have grown to rely on the spectators participation to function to its full extent. This function includes both a physical function as well as an ability to create emotions and a relatable-meaning within the spectator. This thesis enlightens how the use of virtual reality can advance the spectators phenomenological experience of empathy within an artwork. This study is conducted through the use of Lars Elleström's theory on intermediality and multimodality which has been used as a method of analysing. Furthermore, Thomas Fuchs categorization of empathy has been applied as a tool to analyse the creation of empathy within the empirical data.

The empirical data consists of the installation art: *War* (1972) by Marina Abramović and the animated virtual reality experience *Quake* (2017) by BBC Radio 4. Both installations have been studied with the help of case- and field-study. However, since *War* is from 1972, the field-study has been conducted through a visit of the remake *Sound Corridor (War)* from 2017. Henceforth, this thesis questions the empirical data's classification as installation art and concludes their ability to become what Ilya Kabakov calls a total installation. The analysis of the two, concludes that empathy can be created and manipulated through intermediality as well as multimodality. The media guides the spectator's perception of the artwork with the help of their respective iconology to create an experience of empathy.

The experience of empathy is greatly manipulated by the sensorial modality that help to create a spatiotemporal modality. This makes virtual reality a tool to advance the perception of empathy through an immersive state of flow. The creation of time and space where there is none concludes that empathy does not have to be grounded in a physical experience, but that a psychological one works just as well. The thesis does not only question the capability of the total installations to create empathy but also the spectator's ability to relate to the world beyond the work of art.

**Keywords:** virtual reality, immersion, installation art, phenomenology, intermediality, art history

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## Presentation

The exponential growth of technological wonders, like phones, tv, and computers and their accessibility has given not only the ability to gain knowledge, but also made many begin to rely on constant entertainment. When this entertainment becomes a daily necessity as well as expectation, it can be hard to obtain a thrilling experience. Thrill-seeking includes a wide spectra of watching and experiencing audio-visual media, like horror-movies or romantic comedies. Thrill, can come from many things. However, what today may be perceived as entertainment could have been the very opposite in the past. Entertainment today, is no longer a question of comedy but a question of iconology and perspectivation. This study of an empathetic space seeks to find out how a strong emotion like empathy can be experienced within installation art. By studying the artworks: *War* (1972) by Marina Abramović and *Quake* (2017) by BBC Radio 4 the very debate on their ability to become more of total installations submerge, as well as their ability to manipulate the spectator's emotions within an artwork. It is a question of when an artwork goes from being a physical experience to a psychological one, and how that interferes with the spectator's experience.

One could argue that the spectators experience of an installation depends on their ability to immerse into the artwork. This thesis argues that the artwork has to rely on a certain degree of virtual reality for the spectator to immerse. Virtual has its epistemology from *Virtualis* which means: 'influencing by physical virtues or capabilities, effective with respect to inherent natural qualities'.<sup>1</sup> Virtual is therefore merely a noun that defines something to be artistic, and thereby virtual reality is the depiction of what can be seen as another and artistic reality. This is a phenomenon that has been used from 360° rooms in Pompeii to modern digital design. Because when artists accessed the technological tools for remediating old media, virtual reality suddenly got a whole new meaning. Virtual reality can now be used to not only depict an artist's message but also manipulate the experience of bodily phenomenology within the spectator. Virtual reality as together with technical media makes installation art become alive in a way, that not many have experienced before. Experience and installation therefore, goes hand in hand because it allows the artist to set the frames for the spectator to see their message in the clearest way possible; by letting the spectator become part of it.

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<sup>1</sup> D Harper, *Virtualis*, Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001-2017, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=virtual> (accessed 3 December 2017).

## Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to discuss and possibly explain how the total installation creates a phenomenological experience of empathy within the spectator. My interest lies within the transformation of the experience of empathy from the physical to the virtual interaction in a given space, which is why the thesis will focus on the installation artworks: *War* from 1972 by Marina Abramović and *Quake* from 2017 by BBC Radio 4. The study of *War* will be conducted through looking at its remake *Sound Corridor (War)* from 2017. Hence additionally creating a historical debate on installation arts development and influentially within both entertainment and as a teaching-device. However, also with a discussion of the empirical data's ability of becoming a total installation. With those thoughts in mind, I have chosen following framing of a question as well as subqueries for my study:

What significance does empathy have in experiencing a total installation?

- What is a total installation?
- How can one create empathy in a physical and virtual space?
- Does these artworks influence their spectator, and how?

## Theory and Method

The following section will present the theory and method that is used to conduct this thesis. The theoretical background has been based on the concept of installation art. Here, I have used the art historian Claire Bishops book: *Installation Art: a critical history* (2005), to define the term. Furthermore, theories of artist Ilya Kabakov and psychologist Sigmund Freud has been used to define and conceptualize the total installation and its ability to make the actor immerse completely. These theories can be found in Claire Bishops book as well. However, in order to bind together the theory of immersiveness, I have applied art critic Merleau-Ponty's article: *Eye and Mind* (1964). The article supports the notion of how body-phenomenology is created when experiencing an artwork, and hereby a form of total absorption.

What ties together the theory and method is this study's dimension of empathy. I have used Magdalena Nowak's article: *The Complicated History of Einfühlung* (2011), to try to conceptualize the difficult term before tying it together with the psychiatrist and philosopher Thomas Fuchs' article: *The Virtual Other – Empathy in the Age of Virtual Reality* (2014). Fuchs defines a way of recognizing different kinds of empathy in an artwork through an empathy-analysis, something that will be used to point out what potential kind of empathy the artworks in question use.

This study's methodology is a mix between intermedial analysis together with a classification of empathy. The intermedial analysis is defined by Hans Lund in his book *Intermedialitet: ord, bild och ton i samspel* (2002), however I am mostly influenced by Lars Elleström's article: *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010). The reason why I decided to focus on Lars Elleström's theory is because he gives a theoretical framework of understanding not only intermediality but also their core of modalities and modes that goes into the creation of an artwork.

Furthermore, have I used the qualitative method of case-study in order to interpret the artwork. This method is described by professor emeritus Robert E. Stake in his book: *The Art of Case Study Research* (1995). Likewise, have I used the notion of field-study which is described by anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup in the book: *Kvalitative metoder: en grundbog* (2010). Field-study

is not usually used in the context of intermediality and therefore the combination of the two makes a good foundation for opening up for more intermedial field-studies like this.

Claire Bishop defines the concept of installation art to be an arrangement of objects in a given space (exhibition hall, galleries, etcetera).<sup>2</sup> Together, the objects and the space is supposed to increase the spectator's awareness of their own presence within the installation.<sup>3</sup> Bishop argues that an installation has to be theatrically immersive or experimental to activate a spectator's engagement in the installation.<sup>4</sup> Because then by teasing a kind of curiosity or interest within the spectator, the installation heightens a sensory immediacy and physical participation within them, and makes it as if, they are acting in the real world. Immediacy as a term that is highly debated within the research-field of intermediality, and therefore it helps to connect the intermedial aspect in creating space through the spatiotemporal-modality. One could hereby argue that for something to be installation art it has to replicate the real world in order to create a perceptive or even virtual one.

Like Bishop, Ilya Kabakov speaks of installation art as an immersive scene. He points to the fact, that installation art uses different components of the room, such as light, music and objects to immerse and capture the spectator in the work of art.<sup>5</sup> However, where his theory of installation differs from Bishops, is when he points to the fact that those components work together to create an experience of being totally and psychologically absorbed into the artwork. Meaning that it is not only the participation that counts when creating an installation, but the sole creation of spatiotemporality within the spectator. This notion, he considers a *Total Installation*.<sup>6</sup> The total installation is closely connected to *The Dream Theory* by Sigmund Freud. He also defines the theory as '(...) a sensory of immediacy of conscious perception'.<sup>7</sup> By this, Freud meant that a dreams construct is like the perception of a real life situation. Eloquent to that of an experience, where one does not have to think about what they are doing, but only experiencing it as if it is one's conscious perception, as in real time reality and hereby also a kind of spatiotemporality.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Claire Bishop, *Installation art: a critical history*, Tate, London, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 8 & 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 14, 15, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

Freud defined three main characteristics of the dream theory. One is that it is a primarily visual experience, but can include audio. Secondly, it has a composite structure, that allows one to associate freely based on one's individual connotation. Thirdly, there is the ability of every dream element to be replaced by an associative word, meaning that you can explain it.<sup>9</sup> With the dream theory, Freud points out that the body has the ability to experience and create spatiotemporality on its own through dreams, meaning that it, the body, might as well do this consciously meanwhile losing the reality aspect unconsciously.<sup>10</sup> This could happen in a dream asleep but also through day dreaming.<sup>11</sup> Henceforth, if one mixes both Freud's dream theory together with Kabakov's theory of the total installation, it can be argued that virtual reality, just like the physical installation, can be considered a total installation. Like a dream, virtual reality is primarily visual with auditory fragments. It portrays a conscious perception, and it has a structure that can be analysed through an association of an element. In the end, one can understand what is happening when being in a virtual simulation of reality. However, every dream element can still be replaced by an associative word because we can explain the experience to another through empathy. Through virtual reality one closes off the access to the world beyond and enters the state of the dream world even though they are awake. It is, as Freud points out, the perception of the situation that one experiences before themselves that creates an immersive state of flow.<sup>12</sup> The definition of flow relies on the term immersive flow that refers to a state of mind when the spectator becomes fully engrossed in a work of art. It is a condition where the spectator simply forgets the world surrounding them because they are in a state of total absorption.<sup>13</sup>

The experience that Kabakov and Freud speaks of, can be called phenomenological. Merleau-Ponty elaborates this concept, and according to him, the body intertwines vision, mind and movement.<sup>14</sup> When one observes an artwork, one does not only see the image. One can feel and connect with it, because they have the ability to understand the image from within. This ability is constructed through the cultural and social background of the individual, iconology, and providing them the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid..

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Chandler, Rod Munday, *Immersive Flow (Flow)*, Oxford References, 2011,

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-1283>  
(accessed 30 June 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in Merleau-Ponty, M., *The Primacy of Perception*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1964, pp.160.



knowledge of not only psychological feeling but also a physical one.<sup>15</sup> This means that one can get a mental and bodily experience when perceiving an artwork. Which also points to the fact that space essentially only exist in itself and is unchangeable. However, one can change space themselves if their perception of it changes.<sup>16</sup> As an example, if one experiences virtual reality, there is no actual space however, the brain creates spatiotemporality and suddenly the experience of space appears in their mind. Merleu-Ponty points out, that the relation between body and mind, is based on the sensorial modality, as for connecting it to intermediality, as well as one's actions within the work of art. Resemblance between the sensorial modality and the actions within an artwork, are therefore a result of perception and not its actual physical being. Therefore, the mental image, or visualization of what is absent (spatiotemporality), is not how the artwork actually is, but what one's mind perceives it to be and hereby makes it become.

The concept of empathy is defined by Magdalena Nowak. She explains that empathy is a feeling that originates from the Romantic period and describes a connection and allowance for human feelings to be ascribed to objects. She calls it a union of subject and object, or man and nature.<sup>17</sup> Secondly she describes how the notion of empathy can be a way of totally engrossing and understanding *the other's* feelings in a subjective and individual experience.<sup>18</sup> Nowak proceeds to explain that the feeling of otherness is important when talking about empathy. Feeling the other, means that one cannot unify their feelings of empathy with the ones of our own. Instead, we can feel with someone else at the same time as having an ability to distance from them. Nowak calls it respect for the other and clarifies that this is an acceptance of the other's feelings meanwhile understanding them without projecting one's own feelings on them.<sup>19</sup> She even stresses the fact that empathy can give the opportunity to learn from others feelings, which is why empathy can be good for self-reflection.<sup>20</sup> The concept of empathy connects with phenomenology as being the psychological state that is manifested in a bodily expression. This can be experienced both through interacting with the other or merely observing, as Thomas Fuchs points out.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. pp. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Nowak, M., 'The Complicated History of *Einfühlung*', *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2011, p. 321.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 322.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Fuchs, *The Virtual Other: Empathy in the age of Virtual Reality*, T. Englert, Alexander (translation), *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 21, nr. 5-6, 2014, p. 167.

The experience of empathy is by far a complex phenomenon. Empathy expresses the ability to feel with the emotional state of the other. However, Thomas Fuchs differentiates empathy between real- and fictional interactions by categorizing it as: primary, extended, and fictional empathy. Primary empathy is grounded in intercorporality, which is defined as the direct physical interaction between two people. This interaction allows one to modify their expression to fit the others in what Fuchs calls a communicative dance. Essentially, this provides an immediate feedback of emotion between the two.<sup>22</sup> The extended empathy includes explicit as well as imaginative components. This allows extended empathy to make one emphasize with the other through employing a simulation through either taking their perspective or imaginative transposition. Imaginative transposition is the ability to feel with someone else by imagining being in their shoes, and not from interacting with them directly.<sup>23</sup>

Fictional empathy connects empathy and virtuality. This kind allows is based on the emotional relation between fictive or non-personal agents such as robots, avatars etcetera. Essentially making fictional empathy based on pictorial media and hereby letting the spectator perceive content as if it was real. Fuchs calls it an as-if consciousness, something which can be found in children's pretend games. Meaning, that the ability to emphasize with something fictional is incorporated within humans from early childhood. It is the ability to give oneself over to the illusion, however as a grown up, with a split awareness.<sup>24</sup> Where empathy connects with the experience of the total installation is something that can be found within the intermediality of the artworks.

Intermediality is the connection between different media.<sup>25</sup> Two of the leading scholars on the field is Hans Lund and Lars Elleström. They both define intermediality as it being held together by three main components: basic, qualified, and technical media.<sup>26</sup> A basic medium can either be sound, text or image. Qualified medium is a genre, categorization or other qualities that can help to define something. At last, the technical medium is the physical vessel of which the media is presented in.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp. 160.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 161.

<sup>25</sup> Lars Elleström, *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010), p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. & Hans Lund (red.), *Intermedialitet: ord, bild och ton i samspel*, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2002, pp. 9.

As an example, one can experience virtual reality through a head-mounted display (HDM), making the HDM the technical medium.<sup>27</sup> Most media need a technical medium to be realised.<sup>28</sup>

Elleström argues that media as well as art are being dependent on mediating substances like meanings and expressions, and hereby saying that art is an aesthetically developed form of media.<sup>29</sup> Elleström proceeds to further explain that media is about interrelations, and since art and media goes hand in hand, most if not all art can be seen as an intermedial.<sup>30</sup>

Elleström expands the research on intermediality by going one step back to look at the components of media. He calls those modalities and modes. Modalities are separated into four kinds: material, semiotic, sensorial and spatiotemporal.<sup>31</sup> Within those groups are the components that makes the modality. Those are called modes and defines little but important things like shape, colour, feelings and signs.<sup>32</sup> These modes and hereby modalities can be manipulated and when they are, they can change the entire experience of the artwork.<sup>33</sup> Even though it is arguable whether you can separate modalities, this study will focus on use of the sensorial and spatiotemporal modality, however still mention the semiotic and material modality.

Elleström argues that a medium cannot be realized unless they are understood by one or more of our senses. Usually we talk about 5 senses in a person: seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling.<sup>34</sup> Elleström calls those senses modes of the sensorial modality.<sup>35</sup> Meaning that, depending on whether the artwork has a sound, it can completely change the spectator's perception of the artwork. Likewise, even if the spectator does not touch the artwork, they are still able to indirectly feel its tactile qualities, almost like phenomenology and the dream theory argues.<sup>36</sup> The spatiotemporal modality helps to structure the sensorial perception that one gets from the sensorial modality, and recreates the material interface into experiences and conceptions of space and time.<sup>37</sup> Spatiotemporality means the creation of space and time where none exist. It is almost like it is the

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<sup>27</sup> Lars Elleström, *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010), p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

building stone of the total embodiment as for phenomenology. The spatiotemporal modality helps to make one feel like one exist in the time with the artwork, and immerses one completely.<sup>38</sup> Spatiotemporal perception plays with four dimensions: width, height, depth and time. Hence both applying for the physical as well as virtual total installation.<sup>39</sup> The semiotic modality includes indexical, symbolic and iconic signs.<sup>40</sup> The material modality include the intercorporeal space where senses meet a material impact, like an object.<sup>41</sup>

In order to further conduct the analysis of the artworks, I have used a combined method of field- and case-study. This means that I have experienced the artworks and on account of that, I have written a description and analysed them from my own point of view.<sup>42</sup> The field-study allowed me to experience the artwork and the case-study allowed me the opportunity to describe my experiences and make it personal. Therefore, I will execute the method by referring to the experience of the artwork as *I*.

## Material

The thesis makes use of different kind of materials. Most of the theory and method has been based on written sources such as books and articles. Meanwhile the analysis' introduction on the virtual reality as well as installation arts history is originating from both Claire Bishops book: *Installation Art: a critical history* (2005), and Oliver Grau's book: *Virtual art: from illusion to immersion* (2003). The thesis has also used different websites and articles for historical sources describing worldly events, getting numbers of Deaths, as well as texts on the artist Marina Abramović.

In 1972 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, Former-Yugoslavia now Serbia, Marina Abramović introduced her total installation *War*. *War* is described as a narrow corridor with large speakers on the sides. When the spectator entered the corridor through a glass door a sensor would activate the speakers and a blasting sound of recorded machine-gun fire would rattle the corridor

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 36

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Robert E. Stake, *The art of case study research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif., 1995, p. 8.

and shock the spectator.<sup>43</sup> In 2017 the remake of *War* was exhibited at Louisiana the Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, Denmark, however with the name *Sound Corridor (War)*. The concept was the same, except that there was no longer a glass door but a white door as a replacement. The experience of *Sound Corridor* is the one that I will describe however, with the thought of the original name in mind. There exist no pictures of neither *War* or *Sound Corridor*. Not online or in any of the books that I have read. The experience of the artwork was exceptionally intense and not allowed to be recorded or photographed. Therefore, I have drawn the artwork, and it can be found in the appendix.

The second artwork in question is the BBC Radio 4's interactive animated experience *Quake: Trapped Man*. The experience is a 7.34 minutes long animated video. *Quake* is an animated drama in 12 parts. The one that I am focusing on is the virtual reality and 360° experience, that I experienced through the use of an Oculus Rift headset. However, for simplicity's sake I have decided to call *Quake: Trapped Man* for just *Quake* for the remaining of the study, since I will not be talking but only briefly mentioning the rest of the series in the discussion. The artwork brings one into the virtual world of a hotel bar in Ximao South Island, China. Here one is put into the role of a travelling business man who experiences an earthquake and gets trapped under the rubble and debris of the hotel. The experience makes the spectator follow the man's survival while being trapped. It is important to note, that the images provided in the research has been lightened in order for the reader to better see the pictures since the actual experience is seen in a much darker light. I also chose to make a timeline over the video, to make a better understanding of *Quake* for the reader. The timeline can be found in the appendix.

The reason why I have picked these two specific artworks is their ability of being total installations as well as both being in somewhat relatable situations. This gives a good fundament to my analysis historically, empathetically and phenomenologically.

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<sup>43</sup> Marina Abramović & James Westcott, *When Marina Abramović dies: a biography*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2010 p. 57.

## Restrictions

Virtual reality as an art-form is a rapidly expanding field of research. Therefore, I have decided to not disregard but merely comment on virtual reality as a technique as there is much to find already. Moreover, I do not possess the technical knowledge for an analysis of the technical facet, which is why I put my focus towards the direction of the phenomenological aspect of creating empathy instead. This study is going to enlighten how the total installation has developed the phenomenological experience of empathy between the 1970's physical interaction to 2017 metaphysical interaction. In order to do this, I have chosen *War* (1972) and *Quake* (2017) to compare and discuss the different intermedial tools used in order to create empathy.

I have not been able to experience Marina Abramović's original *War*. However, I did get to experience a reconstruction at Louisiana the Museum of Modern Art in 2017. This time the artwork had been renamed *Sound Corridor (War)*. I therefore do not possess the same connotations as if I had experienced it in 1972. However, in order to make up for the lack of time travel, I will be drawing parallels to *War*'s time by using written history sources like *The 'Uncensored War': Media and Vietnam* by Daniel Hallin and *When Marina Abramović Dies: a biography* by Marina Abramović and James Westcott. This gives me the advantage of perceiving the time retrospectively and hereby an ability to draw parallels between the worldly events of its time and today. Something that will be debated in the analysis of the artworks time(s).

Another restriction that I have decided to make is that *Quake* is 7.34 minutes long. I have therefore chosen to comment on it as a whole. I will only talk of the experience, and therefore I have not chosen a specific part since it is all important for understanding the total installation. Instead, the intermedial analysis will pick and choose glimpses of the artwork. However, in order to make it easier to follow, I opted for making a timeline of the artwork, pointing out the important sections of the video. The timeline can be found in the appendix.

*Quake* can be experienced through a ray of technical media, augmented reality and 2D-screens. But I have opted for the virtual reality one and hereby experienced it through an Oculus Rift, which is why I am only discussing it as a total installation.

Both art works are analysed through a field-study and hereby experienced subjectively. Therefore, it may be hard to remain completely objective when describing the two works of art. However, I will try to remain as objective as I can. At the same time, the ordeal of field-study is an ideal way of describe these artworks since the thesis is about the empathetic experience.

## Previous Research

Research on virtual reality is expanding rapidly. It is not only written sources that brings up virtual reality as an art form, but also bigger YouTube channels like TedTalks brings up the subject in their video: *The birth of virtual reality as an art form* | Chris Milk, where Chris Milk gives his account of his research on virtual reality in the art world.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, other thesis' like *Virtual Reality, en empatimaskin?* (2016) By Malte Just has talked about how the virtual reality technique creates empathy, with the video-performance *Det levda baklänges* (2016) by Thomas Rajnai and Jens Nielsen. Malte Just also uses Thomas Fuchs' scheme to analyse empathy in his empirical artwork. Other studies on empathy, includes Marinela Rusu's article: *Empathy and Communication through art* from 2017. Rusu discusses how art communicates empathy through different empirical examples.<sup>45</sup>

I have drawn inspiration by both Chris Milk, Malte Just and Marinela Rusu to write this research. But I have decided to focus on a more theoretical framework, by including the analysis on intermediality and the phenomenological experience of the artwork. Therefore, my empirical data is much more of an example calibre instead of an actual case in the traditional sense. Another honourable mention is the article about the artwork *Far Inside*. The artwork portrays a virtual reality experience about having schizophrenia. It allows the spectator to put themselves in the shoes of a schizophrenic person.<sup>46</sup> And hereby relating to them. Something that really made me think of whether or not an artworks relatability could create some kind of empathy. Hereby another inspiration of mine.

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<sup>44</sup> Chris Milk, *The Birth of Virtual Reality as an Art Form – Chris Milk*, Ted, Youtube, 2016, (video material), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJg\\_tPB0Nu0&t=323s&frags=pl%2Cwn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJg_tPB0Nu0&t=323s&frags=pl%2Cwn) (accessed 2 December 2017).

<sup>45</sup> Rusu, Marinela, 2. *Empathy and Communication through Art*, Review of Artistic Education no. 17, 2017, p. 139-145

<sup>46</sup> Karin Anema, *Far Inside*, APVIS. [https://apvis.nl/far\\_inside/](https://apvis.nl/far_inside/) (accessed 12 December 2017), 2017.

## Definitions

### Virtual Reality

Defined by Oliver Grau as an engineered emulation of reality. It creates immersive spaces where there are none. It is mostly based on a visual-medium and seen as a type of media-art because it can be video, computer-graphics and animations. It embraces a visual as well as sensory sphere and with a head mounted display allows one to enter the artwork and an impression of a living environment.<sup>47</sup> It can even create a mentally absorbing process that increases an emotional involvement.<sup>48</sup>

### Iconology

Erwin Panofsky's term of iconology refers to the artworks broader cultural background.<sup>49</sup> In this research I will refer to the spectator's iconology, meaning their cultural background, as a way of understanding how they decipher the artworks meaning.<sup>50</sup> Hence questioning the artworks intend and inspiration with the spectator's cultural background and knowledge in mind.

## Disposition

The body of the research is divided into three parts, a background, an analysis and a discussion. The first part is called *The Total Installation, From Physical to Virtual Interaction* and functions as a background to account for how the total installation has developed historically as well as an intermedial analysis of *War* and *Quake*. The second part of the analysis is called *The Empathetic Experience*, and aims to try to identify the artworks initial creation and experience of empathy within the spectator. This is also where the notion of phenomenology is included. Lastly, *War and Quake in Their Time(s)*, introduces a debate on the artworks abilities to create and sustain a phenomenological experience of empathy in relation to the time of the artworks. This section also includes a perspectivation to their relevance of the 1970's and now. To finish off the analysis, I have written a final discussion that debates the artworks influence on the spectator.

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<sup>47</sup> Oliver Grau, *Virtual art: from illusion to immersion*, Rev. and expanded ed., MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 2003, p. 3, 5 & 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Anne D'Alleva, *Methods & theories of art history*, 2. [updated] ed., Laurence King, London, 2012, pp. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



## The Total Installation: From Physical to Virtual Interaction

According to Oliver Grau, the first kind of virtual reality was created in Pompeii. An example to this, could be the *Villa of Publius Fannius Sinistor, Boscoreale* from A.D. 60, in Pompeii. The villas walls were decorated with architectural fantasies depicting another town, as the picture to the right shows. The walls were painted as a 360° experience and presented the illusion of looking out of the window into another town.<sup>51</sup> The room invited the spectator to fantasize about being somewhere else when looking at the bright-coloured walls and blue sky embracing a fantasy town.



(Picture, *Villa of Publius Fannius Sinistor, A.D. 60*, from *The art and life of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, Newsweek, INC & Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, New York, 1979, p. 35)

Grau argues that the world changes so rapidly and that we have the ability to produce as fast as we take a picture.<sup>52</sup> Because already in the renaissance, Grau argues, that another example of virtual reality's development can be found. The renaissance is known for playing with illusionary spaces.<sup>53</sup> Raphael's *School of Athens* (1509-11)<sup>54</sup>, plays with the illusion of room.<sup>55</sup> When the spectator beholds the image by standing right in front of it, it creates the illusion of standing within the room among and with the philosophers. It is the perspective that allows the spectator to experience the artwork from their point of view and hereby creating a kind of immersiveness.



(Painting, *School of Athens* (1509-11), Raphael, from Khan Academy. *Raphael, School of Athens*, Renaissance Art in Europe, Khan Academy, 2017 <https://da.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and-colonial-americas/renaissance-art-europe-ap/a/Raphael-school-of-Ahens> ((accessed 13 June 2018)))

<sup>51</sup> Michael Grant, *The art and life of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, Newsweek, INC & Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, New York, 1979, p. 35 & 37.

<sup>52</sup> Oliver Grau, *Virtual art: from illusion to immersion*, Rev. and expanded ed., MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 2003, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Khan Academy, *Raphael, School of Athens*, Renaissance Art in Europe, Khan Academy, 2017 <https://da.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and-colonial-americas/renaissance-art-europe-ap/a/raphael-school-of-athens> (accessed 13 June 2018).

From the origin of the immersive artwork, one could argue that the notion of immersiveness took another turn in the beginning of 1970's. This time allowed a technological development within an artwork and helped to create the notion of installation art that let the audience immerse even more physically. Of course, one could argue that the 360° wall paintings in Pompeii likewise let the spectator walk around and fantasize of being somewhere, but the paintings were two-dimensional the with painted atmospheric view, meanwhile the installation included real life material objects placed physically within a space.

One of the first installation artists was Joseph Beuys who made the installation *The Pack* in 1969.<sup>56</sup> Through him, the spectator could observe, that immersive art no longer had to be a two-dimensional painting like the villa, but instead took the shape of a three-dimensional installation space that you could act within. With the inclusion of letting the spectator walk around the placed objects and seeing the materiality of *The Pack* from all kinds of angles, allowed the spectator to once again immerse into a space. However, Beuys did not use components of sound technology in his installation, but in 1972 Marina Abramović did, and challenged this newly re-found concept by remediating the two-dimensional concept of the past. Much like the Villa Publius Fannius Sinistor, she created a 360° experience in her contemporary artwork *War*.



(Installation, *The Pack*, 1969, Joseph Beuys)

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<sup>56</sup> Tate, Room 6 – The Pack, Exhibitions and Events, Tate, 2017, <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/joseph-beuys-actions-vitrines-environments/joseph-beuys-actions-6> (accessed 13 June 2018).

*The Experience of War*

(Drawings of *Sound Corridor (War)*, 2018, can be found in the appendix as well)

*Sound Corridor (War)* was exhibited at Louisiana the Museum of Modern Art in 2017. The drawings above show the installations placement within the exhibition, which was very anonymous, especially because the ‘box’ of the corridor had the same colour as the walls. One may even argue that it looks a little like a Staff-closet due to how it blends into the surroundings, meanwhile not owning any colours like the pictures behind it. The second picture above, shows the corridor from opening the door and inside the artwork.

The first thought that comes to mind when experiencing *Sound Corridor (War)*, is the name of the artwork. *Sound Corridor* has a double meaning. A sound corridor, could mean a safe corridor, but it could also mean a corridor that has a sound in it and if so, what sound? The inclusion of *(War)* by the end of the name, made me wonder if the *Sound Corridor* was reflection of what once related to war, and now was safe? The name of the installation was deceiving. Once I stepped into the corridor and the door closed behind me, the silence that I was experiencing in the exhibition hall was abruptly broken by a deafening sound machinegun-fire. The sound was intense and I felt it shake through my body and my mind went blank. Immediately my eyes fell on the door before me, and I instantly knew that that was my escape. After all, the corridor was narrow and only offered the one way ahead, or the public humiliation of going back out of the front door and offering the chance of facing the que for trying the installation. However, I did not think of the public in that minute, because I was in a shocked state of mind and immediately walked the three meters length of

the corridor as fast as I could. Once the door in the end of the corridor closed behind me, I was left in a mind numbing silence as I was met by the rest of the *Marina Abramović* exhibition.

When analysing *Sound Corridor (War)* intermedially, there are multiple components and factors to consider. Firstly, the corridor itself is a technical medium. It functions as a long and narrow corridor with white walls that creates an enclosed space which cuts the spectator off from the rest of the surroundings. This can be seen in the drawing of inside the corridor. The corridor is hereby a vessel that makes a physical space where one can enter and act within. Moreover, can both speakers and lamps of the corridor also be perceived as technical media, since the speakers contains and mediates sound and the ceilings lamps is the vessel for light.

The basic media makes itself known through different components. The first basic medium is the text that one is met with before entering the exhibition. The name *Sound Corridor* is indexical since it points to either symbolizing the corridor to be either safe or sounding. It is also a name that plays with the curiosity of the spectator, and makes them enter the artwork, just like Claire Bishop said an installation should do.<sup>57</sup> The sound of the gunfire, is another basic medium. The sound is not just sound, but is used to physically guide the spectator through artwork of shocking them with the loudness of being shot at. Another basic medium is the image, and since the corridor is completely white, the image cannot be found as either figurative nor abstract, but rather what I would argue to be minimalistic. The notion of the white corridor allows the spectator to create their own space with the sound with the gunfire in mind. The white walls and loud sound suddenly becomes very figurative by playing with the spectators sensorial modes. Firstly, the spectator does not *see* anything but white, but the sound that they *hear* are sudden and alarming and those two sensorial modes creates the time and space of being somewhere dangerous, hereby making the spectator imagine being shot at, and therefore together the sensorial modes create the notion of the spatiotemporal modality. When the sensory modes are tampered with in the way that *Sound Corridor* does it, from silence to sudden sound, one could argue that the loud sound, provokes a bodily reaction of both physical and psychological panic because the spectator becomes frightened for their life and wants to flee.

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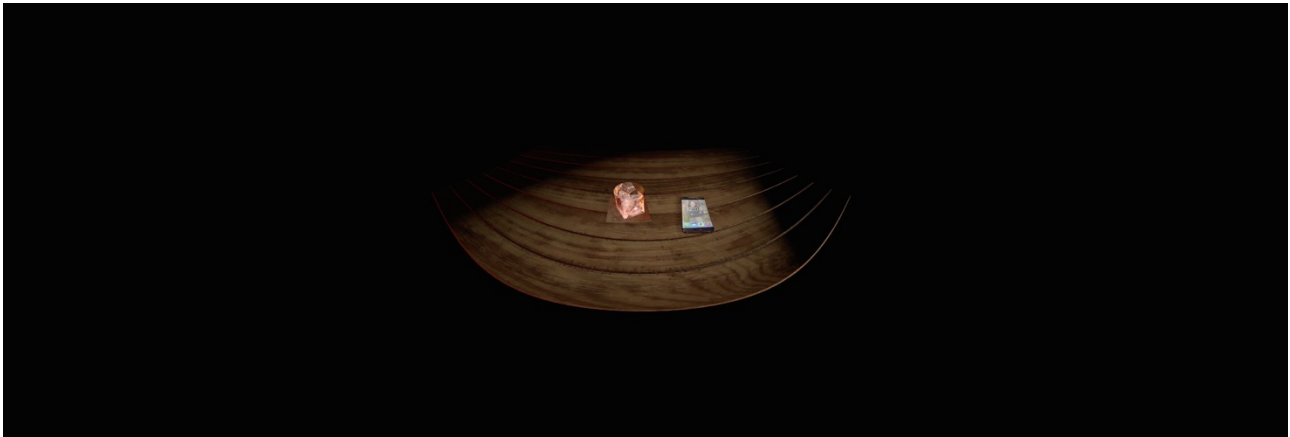
<sup>57</sup> Claire Bishop, *Installation art: a critical history*, Tate, London, 2005, p. 14.

Most people knows what a gun sounds like, whether it is through television (*Westerns, Action Movies, etcetera*), or radio-adventures or even playing video games or even pretend-games as a child. For most people, I dare to argue that the experience of a gun-sound is not real but stems from medialized productions. However, it does not necessarily mean that it becomes less scary, because most people know that a gunshot kills. And who would like to be shot at? And who expects to be shot at, at an art exhibition? It makes *Sound Corridor* boundary crossing as well. Because where one can decide when to watch movies with gunfights in it, *Sound Corridor* gives the spectator no choice other than whether or not to enter, which in itself is a deceiving act because of the name. The gunshot is also an indexical-mode of connecting the resemblance of a gun-sound to danger.

This immersion of the artwork and forgetting of the space as being an exhibition, brings forward the qualified medium to classify the artwork as a total installation since one can absorb completely into a time and space where there is nothing but white corridor. The sound simply makes one forget where they are because of the shock. Hereby, the artwork works both intermedially and multimodally which makes it immersable. It is a game between body and mind meanwhile stepping into Freud's dream world of being conscious of entering the artwork but being unconscious when creating the spatiotemporality because the loud sound and white walls guides one forward, and hereby making the artwork become alive in itself.

The sound is used, as described earlier, a guidance that forced the physical interaction in the artwork. It made the spectator's body move forward in order to flee the 'dangerous' situation that was not anticipated when reading the name. To return to one of the last of the basic media's components: text. The name created the false anticipation. One could argue that; *Sound Corridor*, the safe corridor, made the artwork in 2017 have an much sharper contrast between silence and sound, cosmos and chaos. Because, the one in 1972 when the artwork was called *War*, it can be argued that the bodily reaction could have been different as the name offers a different expectation, of what war symbolises. Hereby it includes the notion of the semiotic modality, by letting the names symbolise something, as mentioned earlier in the analysis. The panic of the situation forced the body to move forward to flee the danger. And one could argue that the false panic the spectator may feel within the intermedial artwork, enhances the very real opportunity of escaping the 'war': *the white door* before you. As in, there is a way out. However, what if you are completely stuck?

### *The Experience of Quake*



(BBC Radio 4, *Quake: Trapped Man VR/360-degree Experience*, t. 0:18, a picture of the bar before the Earthquake)

I put on my Oculus Rift headset and submerged myself into the world of *Quake*. My heads real life movements were transferred onto the virtual with the help of the headset and hereby I was allowed to experience *Quake* as if I were actually existed within the time and space it provided me.

At first, *Quake* introduced me to the experience by letting me know my destination as well as time. I was located in Ximao South Island, China, at 12:08 pm.<sup>58</sup> I soon discover, by the voice coming from my location, that I am put in a role of a travelling business man.<sup>59</sup> In the middle of enjoying a drink, the bar starts to shake. 39 seconds into the experience, a loud crash can be heard and building materials starts to fall around me. Nervously I watched, as my vision turned black with shiny specs of dust until there were no sound and nothing but black to see.<sup>60</sup> This made me wonder, if I had passed out.

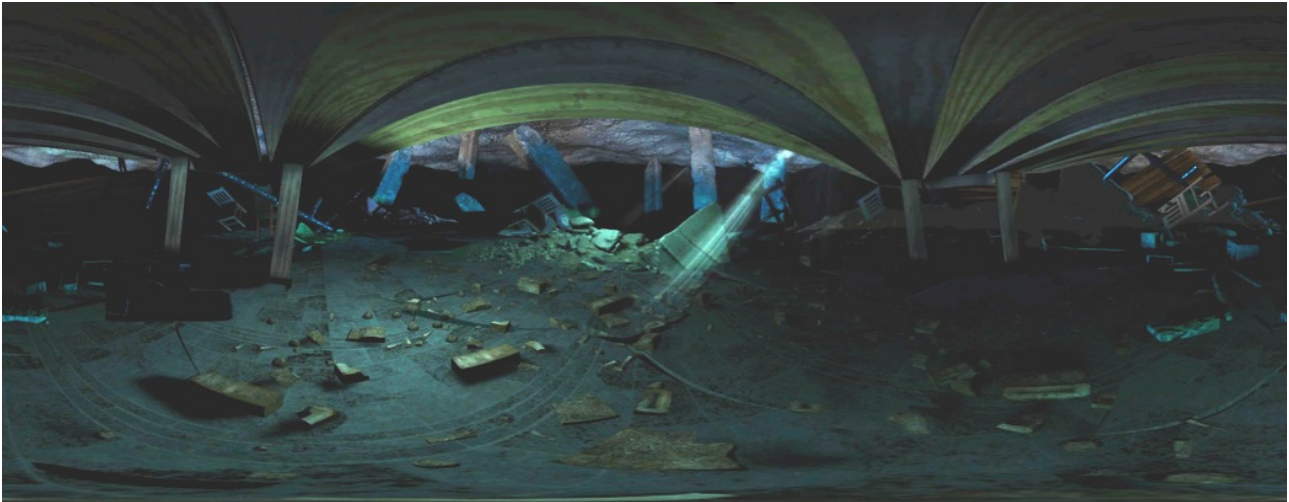
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<sup>58</sup> BBC Radio 4, *Quake: Trapped Man VR/360-degree Experience*, BBC, London, (video material), 2017 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/48hQBnykH9rTrflbFkyTHNT/the-full-vr-360-degree-experience> (accessed 11 November 2017) t. 0:11.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. t. 0:20.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. t. 0:54.





(BBC Radio 4, *Quake: Trapped Man VR/360-degree Experience*, t. 1:04, shows the aftermath of the Earthquake and where the spectator is stuck for the remaining of the experience)

About 1:04, a faint sound of bricks falling and a vision of smoke wakes me up. It does not take long, before my vision is restored, but I am no longer in the bar. Instead, I am confronted with what looks like I am being stuck under the collapsed building. In panic, I reach for my phone.<sup>61</sup> I FaceTime a woman who appears to be my girlfriend. The woman however, is very dismissive and does not really understand what I am saying due to bad reception, and soon after the phone call cuts off. Unfortunately, right after the call ends, I drop my phone which leaves me sobbing.<sup>62</sup>



(BBC Radio 4, *Quake: Trapped Man VR/360-degree Experience*, t. 3:49. Hallucination of safety advice)

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid. t. 1:49.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. t. 3:16.

A while after, I pull myself together and I start hallucinating the safety advice for what to do when being stuck in an earthquake: stay put. This can be seen in the picture above, where I imagine the words: *Drop Cover, Hold On*, before me.<sup>63</sup> My legs are stuck anyway, so I do as my hallucinations and memory tells me to do. But the time becomes tedious and I soon start to imagine the rescue work that must be happening outside. Soon after, I even think of my family. This gives me a feeling of being optimistic, because soon after I hear the voice of the bar-man crying out for help, and I know that I am not alone.

I tell him to stay put, and that we are going to survive.<sup>64</sup> But I soon realise, that I can move my legs. So I manage to get myself free from the rubble and I start moving towards him just as an electric wire starts to spark next to my head. I soon near him, and I can see that he is stuck in a hole and unreachable to me, but I am optimistic, I am not alone. But soon, as I am nearing him, the building starts to shake again and as the sound of another earthquake comes crashing, and I blackout.

Being an intermedial artwork, *Quake* includes all media that Elleström speaks of. The technical medium is based on the head mounted display. It functions as the prime vessel of experiencing *Quake* since it provides both screen, sound and the technique of transferring my movements onto the virtual experience. The basic medium is the visualized experience: this includes everything you see. Here, even the dim lights help in creating the atmosphere. The dimming of the light is part of a semiotic modality that symbolizes that one is being stuck below something.<sup>65</sup> The second of the basic medium is the sounds that matches the visuals: dripping water, loud crashes and the sound of things falling reminds one, that they are far from safe. Even one's own voice is used as a navigation: *we will be safe, I am stuck* etc. Everything could crash at any minute, which is why the spectator reminds themselves of the other basic medium: the text: *Drop Cover, Hold On*. Simply, to stay put.

The qualified medium makes its entrance with the help of the other two. The basic and technical media creates the experience of being in an earthquake and the qualified media classifies this experience. Hereby the qualified medium makes *Quake* a total installation, because one is completely immersed.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 3:49,

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 5:39.

<sup>65</sup> Lars Elleström, *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010), p. 36.



As written in the account of *Quake* one is stuck and cannot move their legs. This is even pointed out verbally by 3:30. This can be argued to be a clever way of disguising the inability to move nothing more but one's head as it tampers with the sensorial modality. One cannot touch, it questions whether or not one's body is paralyzed in the very moment. Because one still has the ability to move their head, and one can still see and hear. The constant reminding sound of falling bricks only ensures ones that they are not safe. Hence creating an underlying panic of having to remain still, since one also reminds themselves of this by 3:49, and hereby manipulating the sensorial modality to create a spatiotemporal one of really being stuck under the rubble.

## Summary

From the physical to the virtual interaction of the total installation, one could argue that the very connotation of knowing what different things signify is important to be able to place themselves within the artwork. Even if one does not touch anything within the artwork the sensorial modality creates tactile qualities of the mind and hereby a phenomenological experience.<sup>66</sup> One does not have to be touched in order to create spatiotemporality and thereby the dream world that Freud spoke of.<sup>67</sup> This makes the spatiotemporal modality the main in creation the immersion and hereby total installation. It is the ability to create time and space where there is none, which is something that one could argue is structured and stimulated by the use of the sensorial modes.<sup>68</sup>

Intermediality hereby, brings forward the artwork and makes it an experience, but it is the very modes that makes it phenomenological. Merleu-Ponty pointed out that it was the very ability to move within the artwork that make it come to life, but maybe in the virtual reality experience even more so? After all, here we had the immersive flow and actual experience of being somewhere. Whereas *War* only provided the very spatiotemporal experience by sound but not vision. However, the artwork does not change it is only our perception that makes it what it is, so maybe the experience is more or less dependent on the spectator's iconology?

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>67</sup> Claire Bishop, *Installation art: a critical history*, Tate, London, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> Lars Elleström, *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010), p. 19.

## The Empathetic Experience

When speaking of the physical to the virtual experience of the total installation, both *War* and *Quake* drives the notion of them being highly relatable experiences. Because the artworks do not only allow the spectator to totally submerge, they also manipulate the spectator's emotions.

The experience of empathy, or as Nowak put it: the ability to put yourself into someone else's shoes, allows us to also perspectivate to the experiences. The *other* becomes ourselves in both *War* and *Quake*, because we put ourselves into the shoes of the one who takes the 'hit'. Maybe more so in *Quake* since we experience a voice and movements coming from us, whereas *War* takes a little more thought to relate to. *War* is a physical experience. However, not intercorporeal as the spectator does not meet anyone and thereby they cannot create a primary empathy. But the extended theory carries the notion of imaginative components. This is something that the sound of gunfire allows by carrying the spectator into another world of fright.

I believe that the empathetic experience in *War* is to be found once the spectator allows themselves to perspectivate to the artwork. When imagining the gun-fire and the war that is portrayed, one can suddenly emphasize with those who experience this on a daily basis. **Letting the spectator become the other for a little while as Nowak puts it.** This kind of perspectivation is a kind of imaginative transposition, even for a little while, which Fuchs calls extended empathy.<sup>69</sup> However, even the use of fictional empathy can be seen in *War*. It is the ability to create an as-if consciousness. However, *War* is not based on a pictorial medium, but an audio-based one. However, through the intermedial analysis one can debate that this as-if consciousness is most certainly created when the sound is so intense and makes the spectators run through the sound corridor. However, the ability to emphasize with something fictional, suddenly becomes very real once the spectator perspectivates the illusion that they have given themselves into.<sup>70</sup> The split-awareness makes *War* an artwork of shared extended- and fictional empathy.

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<sup>69</sup> Thomas Fuchs, *The Virtual Other: Empathy in the age of Virtual Reality*, T. Englert, Alexander (translation), *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 21, nr 5-6, 2014. p. 160

<sup>70</sup> Lars Elleström, *The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations* (2010), p. 19.

In *Quake* one experiences a virtual kind of intercorporeal interaction. One obtains the others mood in a one-sided mortification, much like the respect that Nowak pointed out that one ought to have for *the other*. One understand the man and through the manipulation of intermediality and multimodality, we become the person and experience with him. One could argue, that the feelings that the spectator may feel are a direct reflection of the *others*. The extended empathy, that Fuchs speaks of, includes imaginative components. It manages to guide the viewer into a simulation and gives the imaginative transposition: which means that one takes the place of the other. Which means that by the direct ability to relate to the other person in *Quake*, one may actually become him. One can feel with him, and the sensorial modality of being unable to move makes the spectator become him. Suddenly, the tactility of the experience makes it very real.

The third kind of empathy that Fuchs spoke of was the fictional empathy. Here one could argue that *Quake* as a fictional artwork provides the avatar of feeling empathy with, or even when discovering the bar-man. However, Fuchs also points out that it is the tendency to remain conscious of knowing that one is not actually a bodily presentation of the artwork, because one is not interacted with directly. But in *Quake* one is moving with the head mounted display and being submerged completely into the state of immersive flow. Hereby, debunking that *Quake*'s empathy thrives on the notion of fictional empathy. However, it does exist since it is an interaction between a cyberspace and an as-if intentionality that helps to enhance qualities of expressions, which can, as Fuchs argues, awake fictional empathy.<sup>71</sup> It also helps that *Quake* can be perceived as if it is real through head-moves and relatable animated graphics.<sup>72</sup> Meaning that *Quake* definitely carries the notion of fictional empathy.

### *War & Quake in their Time(s)*

The curious part about the phenomenological experience of empathy within an artwork, is that it derives on the notion of understanding the experience. Of course one can point to the fact that most people have heard the machine gunfire on tv (*Westerns*, games, etcetera) or seen the aftermath of an earthquake on television, but what happens when you actually experience these? The creation of

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas Fuchs, *The Virtual Other: Empathy in the age of Virtual Reality*, T. Englert, Alexander (translation), *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 21, nr 5-6, 2014. p. 160

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

empathy as well as spatiotemporality of an artwork lies within our understanding of the history and culture behind. Thereby one needs to rely on their own iconology to understand.

*War* was created in the time of the *Vietnam War* (1955-1975).<sup>73</sup> The *Vietnam War* was one of the most well documented and medialized events of the present world. There were videos shown in television, graffiti on the walls begging for the war to end, also the papers and plenty of articles were written about it.<sup>74</sup> It was a war that you could easily immerse yourself into in the safe-space of your own home.<sup>75</sup> Meaning that even though you could see a visual representation of the victims and the hardship of the war, it was quite easy to distance yourself from by turning off the tv or not buying today's newspaper, that is if you didn't have a relative who were send to fight in the war.<sup>76</sup> When remembering that this artwork was placed in Belgrade Former-Yugoslavia, that was (and still is) a central place for a lot of Balkan-wars, like the *National Liberation of Yugoslavia* that defied the Nazi's regime, and the fact that Marina Abramović's parents were close friends with Tito and her own father was working as a superior general, points to that it could also be a way for letting the other generation know how the hardships of their culture, parents or grandparents. However, I'd also like to mention Marina Abramović's video-artwork *Dangerous Games* (2009) that portrays little Vietnamese girls participating in war. This artwork was made to make people focus on child soldiers, however also brings the artist in connection to Vietnam and the notion of war. However, with the connotation of understanding what the *Vietnam War* and maybe having relations to the former Yugoslavian battles and having heard the gunshots, it enables the notion of *War* being not just an artwork but a revelation.

*War* could help to make people emphasize with the ones in war, by becoming part the grim side – being shot at. It is a rude awakening by letting the artwork go from complete silence to a loud gunfire, in a room that you can only escape by going through it. Kind of, just like being in war. Maybe *War* was to emphasize and understand what happens in a real war and maybe could even function as an inspiration to be kinder to those who returns.

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<sup>73</sup> Daniel Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 111.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. pp. 116.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

When *War* was remade in 2017 at Louisiana, its name got changed to *Sound Corridor*. *Sound Corridor*, could both mean a corridor with sound or even a safe corridor. The question is, if it is now a reflection of what it once related to, that maybe the war is now safe?

However, the remaking of *Sound Corridor* and the shocking state that it can leave the spectator points to that it still is not safe. Is it because that we forget the seriousness of war in today's society? Even in war, the notion of a 'corridor' is used to describe hiding places within the battlefield. A corridor, is usually a place one can hide during the war, but also a place where one can wait in anticipation, because one never knows, when the next hit is. Even the world can go from silent and safe, like an art exhibition, to suddenly become a place of violent gun-fires? After all, many are maybe not even affected by the sound, because one can experience war through video games, like the first-person shooter game: *Call of Duty*, that portrays war as a simple game. Maybe the new *Sound Corridor* in its total installation, is there to remind people that safety is only as sound as you make it, since you decide whether you should run through the corridor, walk fast, walk slow, the tempo is up to you.

*Quake* does not portray war, but a natural disaster. With the open- and much more globalized world we live in today, it is easy to travel and experience almost any part of the world. At the same time, it has also opened up to the opportunity of more people being involved in natural disasters.

Popular holiday places get hit, like the tsunami of Sri Lanka in 2004 where more than 31.000 people got killed.<sup>77</sup> Or, the forest fires of Greece in 2018. Today, through the travel abilities to the open world, people tend to get much more exposed to natural disasters, not only through media but also by having an actual chance of being part of it.

*Quake* takes the fear of being in a disaster and makes it a virtual reality. It can scare the spectator by letting them be trapped under the rubble with only their head movements to let them understand their whereabouts. By its immersiveness it gives people the opportunity to experience how it is to be in an earthquake, however in their safe-space of the home, but it also drives the notion of creating empathy for the people who actually experience these catastrophes in real life.

The series *Quake* is about learning how to survive an earthquake, so letting someone be part of a virtual one, actually enhances their possibility of surviving one?

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<sup>77</sup> Seiji Yamada, 'The Sri Lanka Tsunami Experience', Disaster Management and Response, *Science Direct*, 2006, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1540248706000022> (accessed June 6 2018).

## The Final Discussion

I guess, the only fair question to ask after the analysis, is why. Why do we need *War*, *Quake* and *Sound Corridor* to be able to immerse into an artwork? How about the simplicity of ‘ordinary’ installations like *The Pack* by Joseph Beuys?

The notion of intermediality is important to discuss because, as proved in the analysis, the very media can manipulate not only the message but also the feelings of the spectator. But is it the inability to feel without a total installation that draws the spectator to these kind of immersive artworks? With an expanding gaming market on virtual reality games, like *P.T.*, *Slenderman* etcetera. it makes me wonder if it is the experience of being frightened or simply feeling shocked that makes one want to go through these artworks. Because both of them are avoidable and even *Quake* one can stop at any moment. Maybe, it is a reflection of the society of today and their necessities.

With the remake *Sound Corridor*, it could be perceived as a reflection of that people need to be reminded of the unsafety of being safe by showing the abrupt difference between quiet and sound. Just like watching a terrorist attack on television or maybe being a victim of a crime. The society of today feels sound, but like an iron corridor in a war, it can become unsafe at any minute. *Quake* on the contrary reflects another contrast between quiet and sound. With the natural disaster, the earthquake takes a quiet situation (the bar), turns it upside down in a shattering earthquake and goes back to the quiet zone of the aftermath. The aftermath gives the spectator time to reflect over the situation, and even think of how to save themselves. This could be an expression of society’s need to be taught how to stay safe during an earthquake, or in a broader perspective a natural disaster. Because like war, terrorist attacks and crime, it can happen at any minute. However, the difference being that one has the possibility to survive without having to run through a sound corridor, they can simply stay put and take cover.

Both total installations put’s the spectator in focus. For the artworks to work, the spectator need to move and act within the given space. Without them, the artwork simply does not exist as more than

an installation. Something, that even Merleau-Ponty pointed out as making an artwork phenomenological and Ilya Kabakov: a *Total Installation*.<sup>78</sup>

The notion of immersiveness within the artworks can be perceived as a life changing experience for some, but for others only a medialized affair like the *Vietnam War*. Moreover, it could also be seen as a way of creating an understanding for the other, but a thrill-seeking for another. After all, the need for entertainment is expanding as more and more challenging media enters the field of entertainment. In other words, maybe one is more prone to extreme experiences like a total installation to be entertained. I guess the question of whether the shock of the artwork is entertaining or not depends on the spectator's iconology.

## Conclusion

So what significance does empathy have in experiencing a total installation? Firstly, it enables the spectator to relate and hereby immerse into the artwork. Secondly, it enables the spectator's ability to learn from the artwork. By becoming part of a space, whether it is physical or virtual, it gives the body and mind an opportunity of total absorption and thereby also the artist the ability to give their message in the clearest way possible, by letting the spectator become part of an empathetic space and put themselves in the shoes of someone else for a little while.

## Further Research

If I got the opportunity to expand my study, I would have liked a more comprehensive qualified research. I would have included more people in both experiencing *Sound Corridor (War)* and *Quake*. Maybe even, interviewed someone who had experienced the original *War*. I would have liked to gather their experiences of the artwork and made the study on the reception of these and questioned whether people actually feel empathy in an extended or fictional way. This would even question whether the empathy you feel is with the other or sympathy for yourself.

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<sup>78</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in Merleau-Ponty, M., *The Primacy of Perception*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1964, pp.160.

Even the adaption from the original *War* to *Sound Corridor* would be an interesting analysis which could be conducted with the help of Lars Elleström's theory on transmediation or adaption.

Furthermore, I believe that once technology allows the common public to access the bodysuit for virtual reality (full body movement), the experience could be discussed further as it may open up for more narrative and adventurous experiences, and maybe even more empathetical ones?

With the expansion of virtual reality and the opportunity to immerse completely into something through technology, more and more papers will arise on the subject matter. Who knows, maybe virtual reality will make installation art as we know it disappear, and make it only a total installation.



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## Appendix

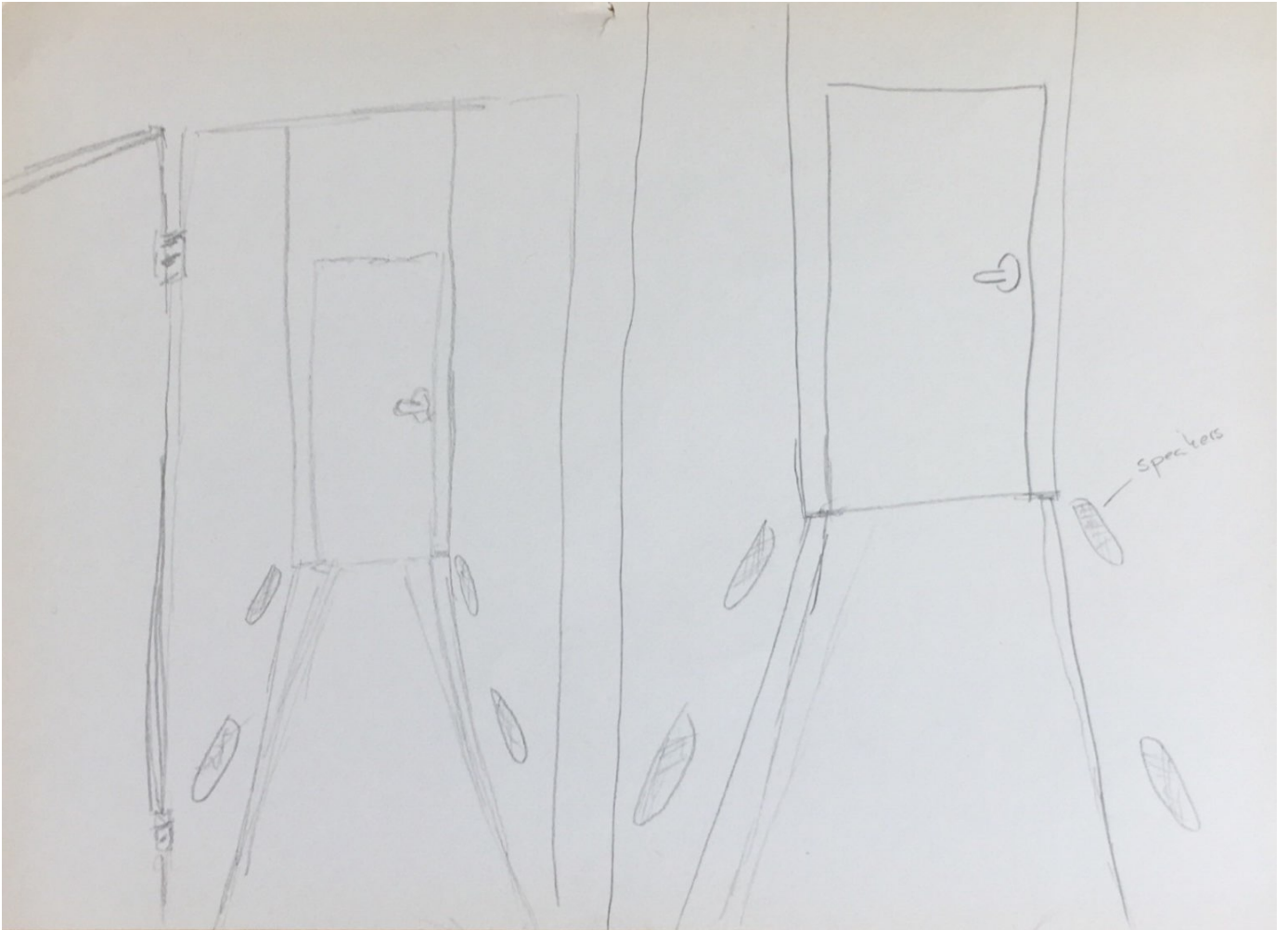
The appendix consists of drawings of *Sound Corridor (War)* as well as a timeline of *Quake*.

- A. *Sound Corridor (War)*'s placement within the Marina Abramovic Exhibition.
- B. *Sound Corridor (War)* from opening the door and inside.
- C. *Sound Corridor (War)*'s ceiling, speakers and light's placement are shown.
- D. Timeline of *Quake: Trapped Man VR/360-degree Experience*

A.

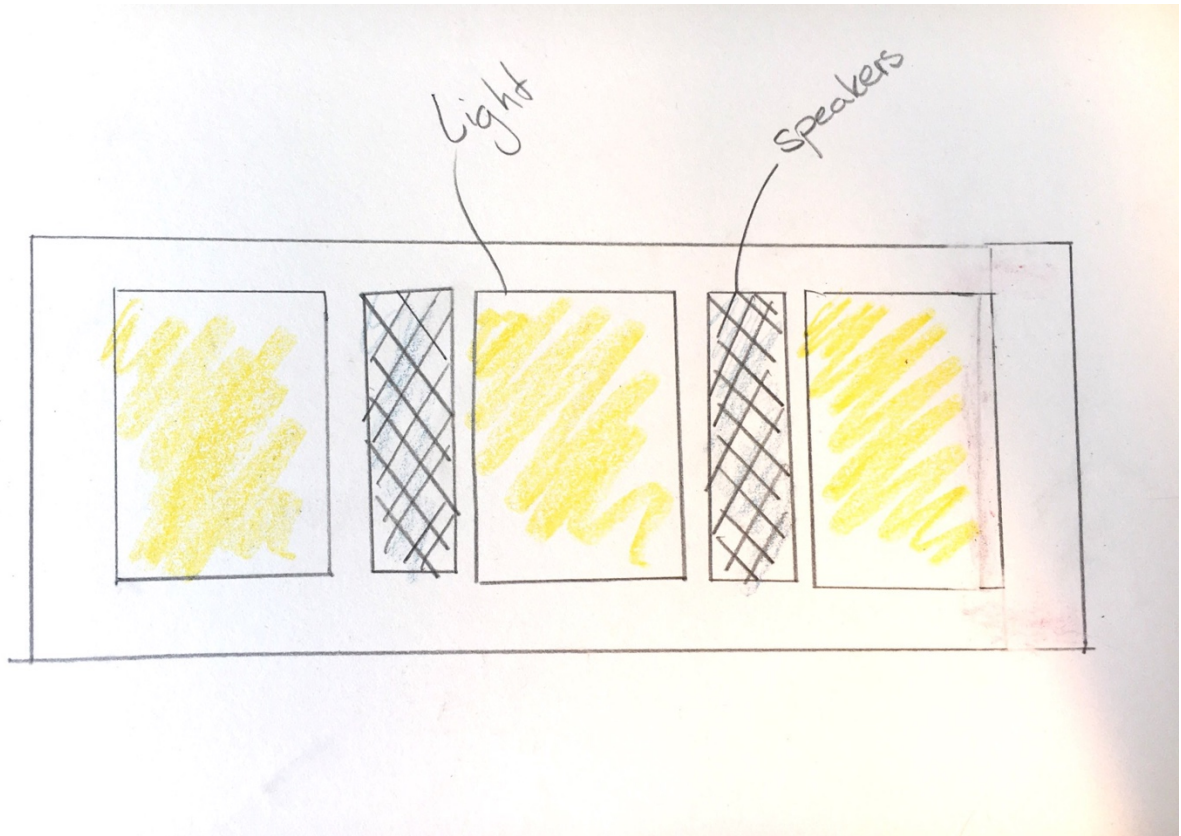


B.





C.



D.

## Quake: Trapped Man timeline

	(Location + time)
0:11	Opening: Ximao South Island 12:08PM
0:18	Bar - at a table having a drink
0:20	Sound of a man speaking - establishing our gender
0:22	Image starts to shake
0:39	Building collapses
0:54	Blackout - Did we pass out? No sound.
1:04	Sound + Smoke wakes us up, reveals we are caught under the rubble
1:49	Tries to FaceTime (calling w video) girlfriend
3:02	Phonecall ends - girlfriend didn't understand + bad signal
3:16	Drops the phone
3:16-3:27	Cries
3:49	Hallucinates safety advice - text appears on screen
4:16	Hallucinates/imagines the rescue mission is happening outside the rubble
5:00	Imagines family
5:26	Hears bar-man calling for help
5:30	Electric Sparks starts to the right, increase danger
5:39	Calls out to barman: 'We can live you and I' <sup>110g</sup> → Remains/becomes optimistic
6:29	Free's yourself and starts moving towards the sound of the barman.
6:35	Notices a hole with light, moves towards it.
6:43	See's the other (bar-man) in the hole
6:47	Building starts to shake again
6:53	Blackout
7:00	Credits