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Fiat lux

**An analysis of light art through objecthood and embodied simulation,
reflecting on the conceptuality and corporeality of the artistic medium**

A Master's Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts (120 credits) in Visual Culture

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Abstract

Fiat lux: An analysis of light art through objecthood and embodied simulation, reflecting on the conceptuality and corporeality of the artistic medium

Though established as a movement and recognised as artistic form, light art remains elusive and somewhat enigmatic in its definitions and categorisations. This thesis aims to contribute to the current discourse on light art by exploring the application of objecthood and embodied simulation whilst acknowledging the contextual, three-dimensional, spectacular, and anti-art qualities of the art form. The thesis will attempt to answer the following research question: *How can our understandings and perceptions of light art be enhanced from perspectives of objecthood and embodied simulation?* The thesis will study empirical materials from the exhibitions *Mehr Licht!* exhibited at Casa Masaccio, Valdarno 2021-22, and *Light & Space* at Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen 2021-22. The thesis will be supported by additional empirical materials external to the two exhibitions to explore multiple perspectives to enhance the discussion of light art. The applied theory is a combination of embodied simulation theory as developed by Vittorio Gallese and theories on space, illumination, and atmospheres as developed by Gernot Böhme, supported by theorisations by Michel Foucault. This thesis will initially conduct analyses through objecthood as developed by Michael Fried, prior to applying additional methodological perspectives of embodied simulation. The thesis will argue for the elevation of space and spatial impact in the interpretation of light art seeing how light (or deprivation of light) must always interfere with space and viewer. The thesis will discuss the benefits of applying a multi-layered approach when interacting with light art, regarding the art form's complex qualities. The thesis will conclude with a discussion of how the methodological perspective of objecthood may allow for a further understanding of the material, ready-made, and conceptual qualities of light art and how the approach of embodied simulation may allow for an increased engagement and consideration of the spatial, corporeal, and immersive qualities of light art.

Keywords:

Light art, space, illumination, atmospheres, embodiment

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Introduction

Though often bare and minimalistic in its form and execution, light art has the power to seduce and immerse viewers into rich and dynamic forms of artistic expression. The very essence of the art form reflects on the poetry between lightness and darkness, good and evil, the known and the unknown; faced with the realisation of the impact light has upon us. A certainty we can find with light art is that it must affect its surroundings – either in its direct cast of light, its reflections, shadows, or the darkness which is left on the space it does not occupy (deprivation of light). While established as a movement and art form, light art remains elusive and somewhat enigmatic in its definitions and classifications. Light art has the potential to be defined and re-defined in its materiality, its non-materiality, as much as in its concept or (seemingly) lack thereof. The often minimalist qualities of light art propose a complexity in its interpretations, resulting in a range of theorisation and methodisation around the art form. This thesis will study three recognised classifications of light art, presenting supporting theories and methods to consider with the objective that we, as viewers, may favour of interacting with different theoretical perspectives to enable a fuller interpretation of light artworks. The thesis will suggest the importance of regarding light art in a larger entity including tradition, context, concept, space, and ultimately the corporeality of the viewer in regarding the art form, discussing their contribution as motivators for embodied simulation. The thesis will advocate for the implementation of embodied simulation, arguing how the approach may allow for an increased engagement and consideration of the spatial, corporeal, and immersive qualities of light art.

This thesis will regard definitions, classifications, and empirical materials within the realm of light art as an art form. This thesis will consider light art as defined by artworks and artistic practice mainly or entirely working with light to convey artistic and/ or aesthetic message. Light art and light artworks will act as umbrella terms of art in which artificial, electric, or constructed natural light functions as the main medium of expression.¹ Artworks under the umbrella term of ‘light art’ may also comply with other established art forms or concepts, as exemplified in the thesis. Moreover, will the technical aspects of light art not be taken into consideration, neither light utilised in combination with other art forms, nor light art which directly conveys linguistic message. The thesis will focus on empirical materials which mainly or completely present, represent, or operate light. The title of the thesis ‘Fiat lux’ translates

¹ M. Clarke, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, p. 148.

from Latin to the biblical expression ‘Let there be light’ found in the third verse of the Book of Genesis 1:3-5:

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.”²

This quotation can also be found in the chapter ‘Seeing Light’ in *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (2017) in which Gernot Böhme utilises the verse in the argumentation of lightness and illumination, underlining how our perception and understanding of lightness is rooted in our existence in the world.³ The thesis does not wish to add religious value to either lightness or light art as an art form, but centralises the poeticism in the verse, in which light art can be interpreted as a manifestation of the impact and significance of lightness and darkness stretching beyond the artworld.

Aim and research question

Drawing on relevant discussions and classifications which has categorised light artworks as sculpture, spectacle, or as not being art at all, this thesis will explore how additional methodological perspectives of objecthood and embodied simulation will allow for an enhanced engagement and consideration of the spatial, corporeal, and immersive qualities of the art form. The thesis aims to contribute to the current discourse on light art by exploring the application of objecthood and embodied simulation on the selected empirical materials, whilst acknowledging the art form’s contextual, three-dimensional, and conceptual qualities. The thesis will attempt to trace how theoretical or methodological approaches relate to how the medium of light is defined, suggesting method as contributor for how light art is regarded. The thesis does not wish to disvalue or discard contradicting classifications or theoretical perspectives but will argue for the importance of all presented approaches as they prove the diversity in which light art can be seen and portrayed. The argumentation will be supported by the empirical materials which will initially be regarded methodologically through objecthood in the first chapter, later revisited through embodied simulation in the second chapter. The thesis will argue for an elevation of the interpretations of light art in the inclusion of regarding the relationships between

² Book of Genesis 1:3-5, English Standard Version Bible, 2001, ESV Online, < <https://www.esv.org/Genesis+1/>>, accessed 17 May 2022.

³ G. Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres*, Routledge, New York, 2017, p. 199.

artwork, space, and atmospheres thorough embodiment. The thesis will aim to answer the following research question: *How can our understandings and perceptions of light art be enhanced from perspectives of objecthood and embodied simulation?* The research question will be supported by the two following sub-questions:

- In which ways can the exploration of different perspectives and classifications of light art, such as the portrayal of light art as sculpture, spectacle, or anti-art, allow for an enhanced understanding of the concepts and aesthetic expressions of light art?
- In which ways does light as artistic form and aesthetic expression connect to spatiality and atmospheres?

Background and relevance

Born in the wake of abstract expressionism and standing on the shoulders of minimalism, young artists on the American west coast were starting to explore ideas and visual expressions related to light and space in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴ Although the utilisation of light to create optical illusions, depth, or contrast did not constitute a new practice per se, technological advancements and enhanced material accessibility of plastic, epoxy, and neon in the 1960s and 1970s pushed for the emerging Light and Space movement.⁵ The informal and loosely affiliated movement would also become referred to as ‘California Minimalism’ or ‘Finish Fetish Art’, most likely due to the assumed inspiration from the west coast climate and flashy lifestyle where waxed surfboards and polished cars became engulfed in the golden California sun.⁶ Artists including James Turrell, Helen Pashigan, Ron Cooper, Mary Corse, Fred Eversley, John McCracken, Bruce Nauman, and Doug Wheeler would become strongly associated with the movement, many still active today.⁷ The impact of the movement can be seen having inspired leading contemporary artists including Olafur Eliasson, Ann Veronica Janssens, Yoko Ono, and Jenny Holzer.

Met with both criticism and praise, light art is a widely recognised and appreciated art form attributed significant artistic value. Festivals, exhibitions, and other artistic events dedicated to light art as a movement and art form are reoccurring happenings on the contemporary

⁴ *LIGHT & SPACE*, exhibition catalogue, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Contemporary, 2021, p. 1.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ I. Wallace, ‘How the Light and Space Movement Preambled Today’s Merger of Art and Tech’, *Artspace* [website], 30 April 2014, <https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art_market/light-and-space-52248>, accessed 12 March 2022, para. 7.

⁷ *ibid.*

art scene. Further technical developments during the 21st century has also opened for new adaptations and developments of the art form, including drone art and augmented reality, ensuring further accessibility to light art and its contemporary relativity. The theoretical and methodological application of the relatively new concept of neuroaesthetics through embodied simulation advocates for actuality. Hereby acknowledging how embodied simulation connects to the very core of the practice of light art as well as the Light and Space movement where manipulation of space and light acts as components of distorting the viewer's perception of reality. These traditions, discussions, fascinations, and mysticism around light art lay as foundation for the thesis.

Empirical material

In the span of two months in the autumn of 2021, two exhibitions dedicated to light art and the Light and Space movement were inaugurated in Europe. *Mehr Licht!*, named after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's famous spoken last words, curated by Rita Selvaggio, exhibited October 2021-February 2022 at Casa Masaccio in the small town of Valdarno outside of Florence in Tuscany, Italy. The exhibitions will not be analysed in their completeness but empirical materials will be extracted for analyses. Thus, will short introductions of both exhibitions follow. The exhibition *Mehr Licht!* (Fig. 1 & 2), dedicated and inspired by the collective writings of Daniele del Giudice, *In Questa Luce* (In This Light), published in 2013, was created with the aim to '[...] focus on phenomena of perception and on the idea that light itself can be both



Figure 1: Kaspar Müller, *Tree of lights*, 2021, (Installation view), Casa Masaccio, Valdarno San Giovanni, 2021, photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNOstudio.

Figure 2: Michel Verjux, *Nicht Mehr: poursuite à la cheminée*, 2021, Projector, (Installation view), Casa Masaccio, Valdarno San Giovanni, 2021, photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNOstudio.

subject and material of art.’⁸ The exhibition presented a selection of nine artworks by seven artists, including Joseph Kosuth, Kaspar Müller, Alfredo Jaar, and Ann Veronica Janssens.⁹ The somewhat anonymous exhibition space of Casa Masaccio presents a narrow open door directly from the street from which red neon light seeps. The space occupies three levels of floors, as well as part of an outdoor courtyard, and presents the exhibited artworks without wall texts or labels. No printed exhibition catalogue is available. The unlit space enhances the focus of the artworks, allowing for the visitor to explore the Italian architecture of exposed beams, brickwork, and terra cotta floor tiles completely through the light emitted by the displayed artworks.

The second exhibition, *Light & Space* (Fig. 3 & 4), titled after the very movement and curated by Marie Nipper exhibited between December 2021-September 2022 at Copenhagen Contemporary (further referred to as CC), in the Danish capital. The remade shipyard-into-art space displays over thirty works spread over 5000 m² by artists including James Turrell, Bruce Nauman, Helen Pashgian, and Doug Wheeler. This spectacular and lavished exhibition presents the yet largest collection of artists from the Light and Space movement in Europe, also including a selection of contemporary artists whose works resonate with the movement.¹⁰ The industrial elements of the previous shipyard are visually present in the exhibition space. Incorporated visible piping systems, electricity boxes, and ventilation systems break the otherwise white cube aesthetics. The well-lit, informative, and vast exhibition covers three floors, offering a contemporary presentation of the Light and Space movement. The spaces’ dedication of being

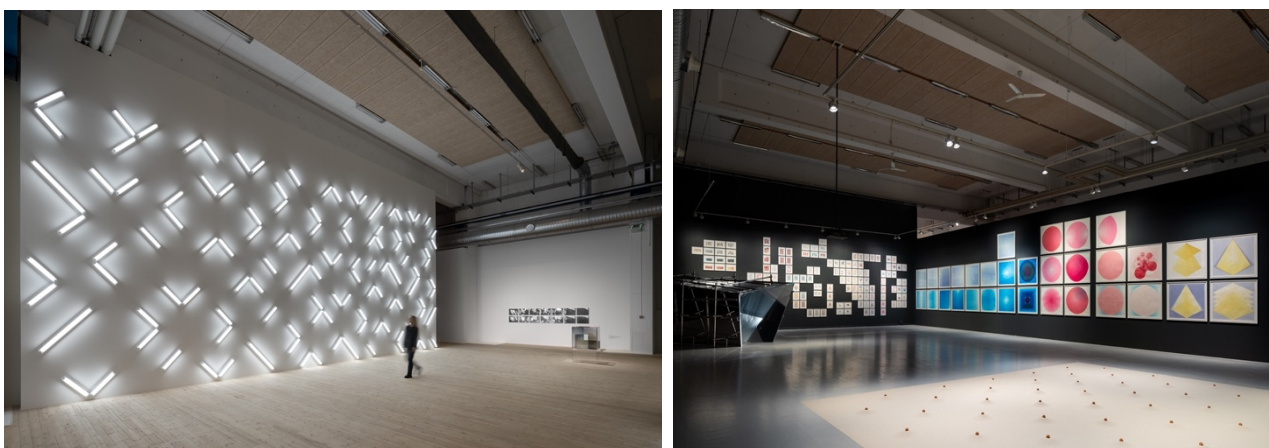


Figure 3 & 4: *Light & Space* 2021. (Installation view), *Light & Space*, Copenhagen Contemporary, 2021, photo: David Stjernholm.

⁸ Casa Masaccio | Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, *Mehr licht"- (più luce!)* [media release], October 2021, para. 3, <<https://www.casamasaccio.it/mehr-licht-piu-luce-2/>>, accessed 14 February 2022.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Copenhagen Contemporary, 'LIGHT & SPACE', *Copenhagen Contemporary* [website], 2021, <<https://copenhagencontemporary.org/light-space/>>, accessed 4 March 2022.

focused on presenting innovative, large-scale, and technically demanding art and installations is noticeable throughout the exhibition.¹¹

Although both dedicated to exhibiting the Light and Space movement and light art as art form, the two exhibitions are considerably conceptually different, regarding inspiration, intention, size, and physical spaces. The productions of the selected exhibitions confirm the interest and relevance of the artistic form and concepts represented by light art, whereas the different approaches and executions of said exhibitions validate the range of conceptual interpretation light art bears.

The thesis will discuss light art in relation to form, concept, and context, supported by the empirical materials. The thesis will not analyse the empirical materials in depth but will utilise the empirical materials as subjects on which to apply selected diverse classifications of light art. This method will allow for the thesis to manifest the complexity of light art, as exemplified in the diversity of the two exhibitions regarding concept, context, and execution. Although not covering the complete genre of light art, nor the exhaustive possibilities of defining light as artistic form, the empirical downstrokes will allow for a discussion on the current presentations, classifications, and discussions of light art. The empirical material will include the selected exhibitions regarding concept and execution but will not consider or analyse all works exhibited in either exhibition. The following works will be analysed individually and in relation to its surrounding spaces and exhibition at-large: Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)* (2004), as exhibited at Casa Masaccio and James Turrell *Aftershock* (2021) and Eric Orr, *Zero Mass* (1972-73), exhibited at CC. The thesis will be supported by the following additional empirical materials external to the two exhibitions to strengthen and support the argumentation: Dan Flavin *Untitled* (1996), Dan Flavin *Six alternating cool white/ warm white fluorescent lights vertical and centred* (1973), Dan Flavin, *the nominal three (to William of Ockham)*, 1963 and Alighiero Boetti *Lampada annuale* (1966).

Theory

This thesis will in the first chapter introduce light art from three diverse theoretical approaches: theorisations around sculpture as developed by art historian Rosalind Krauss and appropriated on light art by art historian David J. Getsy, spectacle as discussed by situation theorist Guy

¹¹ *ibid.*

Debord, and anti-art and ready-mades as theorised by philosopher George Dickie. This is performed to introduce and discuss diverse theorisations around light art. Moreover, will the second chapter introduce the main theoretical perspectives of embodied simulation theory as developed by neuroscientist and professor in psychobiology at the University of Parma, Vittorio Gallese and art historian and professor David Freedberg. Moreover, will the second chapter discuss perspectives of perceived space, lightness, and atmospheres, as developed by philosopher Gernot Böhme. These ideas will be supported by theories on architectural space and their pre-defined qualities as developed by philosopher Michel Foucault and architect Sarah Robinson. The main theoretical perspectives will be utilised to underline the importance of regarding spatial and ambient impact in the discussion around light art.

The foundation of embodied simulation theory derives from a humanities, social sciences, and art historical point of view by a shared sense of being and interacting. Embodied simulation theory builds historically upon empathy theory and scientifically on semi-recent neurological findings of mirror neurons.¹² Empathy is conceptually and linguistically derived from the German term *Einfühlung*,¹³ as developed by F.T. Fischer, Robert Fischer, and Theodor Lipps during the late 1800s. The term is often recognised in the contemporary discourse as a social interpersonal concept but refers to both intersubjective relations as well as relations towards inanimate objects.¹⁴ The neurological findings of so-called mirror neurons in our brain, discovered by a research team the University of Parma led by researcher Giacomo Rizzolatti in 1992, constitutes the second leg of which embodied simulation theory is built on.¹⁵ Mirror neurons are premotor neurons which fires both when the subject performs an action, as well as when the subject observes another subject performing that same action.¹⁶ Hence, action observation here triggers the same neurological activation as action execution. The discovery has for the first time mapped a neural mechanism which directly connects a visual description of an action with its execution, indicating that the observer understands the intent and purpose of the act.¹⁷ Further studies conducted in the early 2000s confirms that mirror neurons are activated based on perceived actions and intents. In a 2001 study conducted by Umiltà et al., a subset of

¹² V. Gallese, 'Embodied Simulation. Its Bearing on Aesthetic Experience and the Dialogue Between Neuroscience and the Humanities', *GESTALT THEORY*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2019a, p. 113-114.

¹³ The term literally translates to 'in-feeling' or 'feeling-into'

¹⁴ R. Curtis, 'An Introduction to *Einfühlung*', *Art in Translation*, tr. R. G. Elliott, vol. 6, no. 4, 2014, pp. 354-356.

¹⁵ L. Winerman, 'The mind's mirror', *American Psychological Association* [online journal], vol. 36, no. 9, 2005, para. 8-12, <<https://www.apa.org/monitor/oct05/mirror>>, accessed 14 May 2022.

¹⁶ V. Gallese, 'Mirror Neurons, Embodied Simulation, and the Neural Basis of Social Identification', *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 19, no. 5, 2019b, pp. 520-521.

¹⁷ V. Gallese, *Embodied Simulation and its Role in Intersubjectivity*, in T. Fuchs, H.C. Sattel, P. Henningsen eds., *The Embodied Self. Dimensions, Coherence and Disorders*, Schattauer, Stuttgart, 2010, pp. 78-79.

mirror neurons in macaque monkeys were found which were triggered also when parts of the observed actions were covered, demonstrating how the isolated group of mirror neurons fired also based upon speculation.¹⁸ A 2002 study conducted by Kohler et al. indicated the coding of actions without visual observation, solely relying on sounds indicating the action proceeding. These studies indicate the existence of an internal mechanism which activates the same neurons in performed, observed (visually and auditorily) and expected activities.¹⁹ The discoveries led to the development by embodied simulation theory, summarised here by Vittorio Gallese:

The discovery of mirror neurons and of other mirroring mechanisms in the human brain shows that the very same neural substrates are activated when these expressive acts are both executed and perceived. Thus, we have a neurally instantiated we-centric space. I posit that a common underlying functional mechanism—embodied simulation—mediates our capacity to share the meaning of actions, intentions, feelings, and emotions with others, thus grounding our identification with and connectedness to others. Social identification, empathy, and “we-ness” are the basic ground of our development and being.²⁰

Embodied simulation has been posed as a theoretical and methodological approach in aesthetic experiences by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese in ‘Motion, emotion and empathy in esthetic experience’ (2007). The article proposes how empathic responses and engagements in art and other aesthetic experiences by viewers encompass the activation of embodied mechanisms (mirror neurons). This implies the production of both aware and unaware embodied corporeal simulations in the viewer as part of the reaction to art and other aesthetic experiences.²¹ This thesis will not discuss the historical or scientific aspects of empathy theory or embodied simulation theory but will utilise the theorisation and methodology as developed by Freedberg and Gallese, applying it on the empirical materials which will include discussions on three-dimensionality, space, and corporeality regarding embodiment.

The thesis will regard space, lightness, and atmospheres with a foundation in Gernot Böhme’s ideas as developed in ‘Light and space. On the Phenomenology of Light’ (2014) and *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (2017) to establish an understating for space and its physical, aesthetical, and sensorial impacts. Michel Foucault’s writings in *Of Other Spaces* (1997), will introduce Foucault’s notions of space as not being homogenous and blank but instead entailing pre-existing sets of qualities which we cannot disregard. Foucault emphasises the idea that we do not occupy empty spaces, and how they may even hold a ‘spectral aura’.²²

¹⁸ V. Gallese, ‘Mirror Neurons, Embodied Simulation, and the Neural Basis of Social Identification’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 19, no. 5, 2009, p. 521.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Gallese, 2009, p. 520.

²¹ D. Freedberg & V. Gallese, ‘Motion, emotion and empathy in esthetic experience’, *TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 5, 2007, p. 197.

²² M. Foucault, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, in N. Leach ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. Routledge, New York, 1997, p. 2.

This may indicate what Gernot Böhme defines as *atmosphere*. Atmospheres, refers to a sense of belonging and feeling or mood of spaces, situations, or experiences which may be encountered instantly upon entering a space.²³ Böhme advocates for atmospheres being dependent on and created by the relationships between subject and object, postulating the corporeality of the subject as reference point in the experience of atmospheres. Böhme's theorisations of lightness and its relation to space will be regarded in the triality of architectural, perceived, and experienced spaces. The thesis will accept the theoretical terminologies as utilised by stated theorists and philosophers.

Method

The analysis of the empirical materials will be divided into two methodological subdivisions. The initial analyses of the empirical materials Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)* (2004) and James Turrell *Aftershock* (2021) – presented in chapter one – will be performed based on Michael Fried's theorisation and methodisation of objecthood. The minimal qualities of light art propose a methodological foundation in objecthood, where the artwork is interpreted in terms of its formal and material qualities. The second part of the analysis – presented in chapter two – will revisit the same empirical materials of Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)* and James Turrell *Aftershock* through embodied simulation methodology as developed by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, originating from embodied simulation theory. The second chapter will also include an analysis of Eric Orr's *Zero Mass* (1972-73) through embodied simulation with a following discussion on the objecthood of the artwork. These methodological choices stem from the thesis aim of contributing to the current discourse on light art by exploring embodied simulation regarding the selected empirical materials, whilst acknowledging light art's contextual, three-dimensional, spectacular, and anti-art qualities. The two-step analysis will allow for the inclusion of both object and embodiment aspects of light art, enabling the connection to both conceptual and corporeal aspects of the art form's relations to space and physicality. The empirical materials have been studied and analysed on site with additional analyses performed in retrospect through documentation of images and notes from the exhibitions. The phenomenological experiences have been discussed on site with other visitors. In *Art and objecthood* (1967), Michael Fried explores the formal qualities of minimalist

²³ Böhme, 2017, pp. 11-12.

art (referred to as literalist art by Fried), Pop, and Op art,²⁴ to disassemble the analysis of form in minimalist sculpture and painting. Fried introduces the concept of objecthood, concurrent of the word object and the suffix -hood which indicates ‘a state of being’ or ‘a group of a particular characteristic or class.’ Hence, signifying the condition or state of being an object. The full meaning of objecthood, must be characterised of the meaning of the word *object*, where the noun refers to a material or tangible item that can be seen or perceived.²⁵ For Fried, objecthood defines minimalist (literalist) art as artworks acknowledging the status of being merely an object. Fried utilises works by Donald Judd’s and Robert Morris’ as examples to highlight the importance of regarding minimalist art and objects as an entity.²⁶ Although developed around minimal (literalist) art, and utilising minimalist sculpture for his argumentation, the thesis will argue for the application of objecthood on light art, acknowledging light art’s often minimal and ready-made characteristics in combination with well-defined and developed concepts. In ‘Objecthood and the Problem of Form: A Critical Introduction*’, art historian Regine Prange endorses the application of objecthood on other types of art, including contemporary art, stating ‘[e]ven beyond the context of Minimal Art, Fried’s and [Clement] Greenberg’s arguments can reveal the controversial status of the artwork as an object-like entity.’²⁷ Prange discusses objecthood in relation to works by Jeff Koons, highlighting the intricate juxtaposition of works by Koons, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, and Dan Flavin where the raw and readymade materials meet sophisticated ideals of art. Prange states:

They present the artwork as an empty container, which leads us to a paradoxical conclusion: objecthood as rooted in the ready-made and its contemporary modifications emerges from the absence of form in terms of its classical definition.²⁸

Prange poses objecthood as ‘artistic strategy and quality’, referring to Jeff Koons’ *Inflatables* series (1978–79) and the contradictive qualities between the materialistic and ideological concept, as well as execution.²⁹ The method of objecthood includes accounting for experiencing the object in a situation in which the viewer is present. Physical participation with the object is

²⁴ Op art, short for Optical art is a style of art playing on geometry to create optical illusions

²⁵ The word object holds a binary interpretation, referring to the verb object which is defined as ‘to offer a reason or argument in opposition’, ‘to express or feel disapproval, dislike, or distaste; be averse’, or ‘to state, claim, or cite in opposition; put forward in objection, disagreement, or disapproval’.

²⁶ M. Fried, ‘Art and Objecthood’ (1967), in M. Fried ed., *Art and Objecthood*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 149.

²⁷ R. Prange, ‘Objecthood and the Problem of Form: A Critical Introduction*’, in G. U. Großmann and P. Krutisch eds. *The Challenge of the Object. Proceedings of the 33rd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art*, Nuremberg, 15th - 20th July 2012, pp. 1214-1218, < https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/5170/1/Prange_Objecthood_and_the_problem_of_form_2013.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2022.

²⁸ *ibid.* p. 1215.

²⁹ *ibid.*

thus essential, in which awareness of scale as a function of comparison to one's body size and space between subject and object are implied. Fried states:

It is, I think, worth remarking that "the entire situation" means exactly that: *all* of it—including, it seems, the beholder's *body*. There is nothing within his field of vision—nothing that he takes note of in any way—that declares its irrelevance to the situation, and therefore to the experience, in question. On the contrary, for something to be perceived at all is for it to be perceived as part of that situation. Everything counts—not as part of the object, but as part of the situation in which its objecthood is established and on which that objecthood at least partly depends.³⁰

Although developed as a critique on minimalist art, the application of the method is seen as beneficial firstly, regarding how minimalist art and artists play with the notion of object/ space/ concept, deliberately creating art bordering between the three. Secondly, Fried poses minimalist (literalist) art as being relational, arguing how minimal art (unlike modernist painting and sculpture) create relations both with internal media and material as well as with external elements including space and audience. Though recognising the involvement of stated aspects, Fried re-asserts the centralisation of the object:

The object, not the beholder, must remain the center or focus of the situation, but the situation itself belongs to the beholder—it is his situation. Or as Morris has remarked, "I wish to emphasize that things are in a space with oneself, rather than . . . [that] [*sic*] one is in a space surrounded by things."³¹

Thus, will an analysis through objecthood allow for an establishment of the object aspects, acknowledging spatial and subject-object corporeal relationships, and include analysis of the entirety of the situation, as the method advocates for the registration of all perceived stimuli.

As developed by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, embodied simulation refers to a bodily response or activation where we as viewers physically reproduce movements, facial expressions, or even moods in our meeting with artworks (aesthetic experiences). Although possible in any type of aesthetic experience, Gallese advocates for the importance of dynamism for embodiment to be triggered.³² Since the discovery of mirror neurons and thus embodied simulation theory, the theory and method has been applied and recognised in a range of disciplines, laying as foundation for the contemporary field of neuroaesthetics. Simultaneously, has embodied simulation as method been met with critique how a sociological perspective is disregarded.³³ Professor of Philosophy and Psychiatry of the Heidelberg University Thomas Fuchs argues how we in interpersonal interactions do not use '[...] imaginative,

³⁰ Fried, op. cit., p. 155.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 154.

³² P. G. Falvo, 'Conversation with Vittorio Gallese about empathy and aesthetic experience', *Studies in Digital Heritage* [online journal], vol. 2, no. 1, 2018, para. 13-15.

³³ T. Fuchs, 'Levels of Empathy – Primary, Extended and Reiterated Empathy', in V. Lux, S. Weigel eds., *Empathy*, 1st ed, Palgrave Studies in the Theory and History of Psychology, 2017, pp. 27-29.

introspective simulation routines, or inferences when we interact with another person. Instead, we immediately perceive the other's intentions and emotions in his expressive behaviours and in his meaningful actions as related to the context.³⁴ Similarly, has the application of embodied simulation theory and method on art and aesthetic experiences has also been questioned. Andrea Pinotti, Professor of Aesthetics and Representation and Image Theories at the Università Statale of Milano, questions the usage of *art* as an umbrella term, arguing how embodied simulation as a method is not applicable on all artistic media or forms, regarding the large differences in how we approach and understand different categories of art. Pinotti confirms the importance of dynamism in the discussion of embodied simulation and argues for an inevitable embodiment in art forms which are based upon three or more dimensions – claiming embodiment to be a crucial part of the artwork itself.³⁵ The methodisation of embodied simulation will not regard empathic or interpersonal situations but will solely be applied in the interpretation of the empirical material together with an initial analysis through objecthood. The conscious methodological choice of initiating with analysis through objecthood will offer a foundation in which the discussion of relativity between subject and object are already present in the initial analysis. In the application of embodied simulation, similar discussions can be found as well as in the aspect of space and atmosphere, allowing the methodology to bring the discussion of the topic forward.

The application of both objecthood and embodied simulation is based on the identification of the methods as suitable for a study of this character. With awareness of the methods' strengths and weaknesses, the study finds a phenomenological account and reconstruction of lived experiences of the subject (researcher) beneficial for the thesis aim and research questions. The thesis is aware of concerns regarding all phenomenologically based methodologies in which the application of embodiment simulation implies the inability to detach the researcher both from the direct bodily and sensorial experiences, situation, as from its presuppositions. However, being based in neurosciences would it in theory be possible to perform neurological studies on subjects encountering light art. Similar studies on embodiment in aesthetic experiences, for instance in the encounter of artworks by Lucio Fontana, have been performed by Vittorio Gallese and David Freedberg.³⁶ These studies have been regarded as methodological foundation and validation. Moreover, presents the methodology limitations in data quantity, as the methodologies in this study will be utilised from a single-person perspective.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁵ A. Pinotti, 'Quasi-soggetti e come-se: l'empatia nell'esperienza artistica', *PSICOART*, no. 1, 2010, pp. 16-18.

³⁶ D. Freedberg & V. Gallese, *op. cit.*, p. 198-200.

Previous research

Broadly speaking, this thesis will follow an art historical tradition of medium analysis engaged with the study and definition of various types of artistic forms, mediums, and genres.³⁷ This study particularly builds on previous discussions concerning definitions of light art as a specific art form. Here, will the methodological structure utilised by Claire Bishop in *Installation Art: a critical history* (2005), in which Bishop establishes her argumentation in four major theorisations act as structural directive for the thesis. Bishop states, '[t]hey should be considered as four torches with which to cast light on the history of installation art, each one bringing different types of work to the fore.'³⁸ Theoretical foundations in psychoanalysis, phenomenology, subjective integration, and ideas on the installation art as political subject are juggled to contextualise and present different perspectives within the realm of installation art. Bishop builds her argumentations by interacting between diverse theorisations, whilst directly regarding the empirical materials and their art historical tradition to enable discussion around the multiple structures installation art presents.³⁹

Previous research in the field of light art has been conducted through a range of diverse theoretical perspectives. In *Abstract Bodies: sixties sculpture in the expanded field of gender* (2015), art historian David J. Getsy uses light art and a selection of Dan Flavin's work to answer the question on how the emerging understanding and recognition of *transformable* genders and bodies in the 1960s relate with sculpture's relationship to corporeality.⁴⁰ Inspired by art theorist and professor Rosalind Krauss' ideas on the sculpture in the expanded field, Getsy appropriates Flavin's work as sculpture prior to introducing Flavin's practice through the lens of queer theory. Getsy's argumentation is supported partly by the expanded views on what constitutes as sculpture as we have witnessed from the 1960s and 1970s, alongside the expanded views on gender identity. Getsy subsequently explores how sexuality and the body can be

³⁷ Other examples of modernist tradition of medium analysis can be found in G. W. F. Hegel's *Aesthetic Lectures on Fine Art*, published posthumously in 1835, in which Hegel discusses the classifications of media, materiality and art forms of architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry. Similarly attempted Walter Benjamin to define the medium of photography in the essay 'The Work of Art in in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1935) by identifying unique characteristics in the medium, thus developing new terms in which the aesthetic experiences of photography could be understood. In the later part of the 1900s, examples of medium analysis can be found in Noël Carroll's scepticism on film in which he radically suggested the abandonment of utilising artistic mediums as categorisations of art.

³⁸ C. Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History*, 3rd edn, Tate Publishing, London, 2010, p. 10.

³⁹ *ibid.* p. 8-11.

⁴⁰ D. J. Getsy, *Abstract bodies: sixties sculpture in the expanded field of gender*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2015, preface.

represented and manifested through abstract and minimal sculpture.⁴¹ In both Getsy's *Abstract Bodies* and Krauss' *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979), understandings, diverse classifications, and appropriations of art forms are present, and are thus also seen as relevant previous research regarding how this thesis studies classifications of light art.

Other relevant research in the field of light art has been conducted by Michael Katzberg in his 2009 doctorate thesis *Cultures of light: contemporary trends in museum exhibition*. Although examining a practical and technical approach to the use of light in a museological context, Katzberg initiates his thesis through analysing light artworks which '[...] situates the theoretical concept of light within the framework of the production of art and its relation to art history.'⁴³ Katzberg's theoretical base is that of his supervisor Mieke Bal who in the unpublished manuscript *Affect as Medium* (2008) argues light to be a 'semantically empty' medium, which nonetheless, is capable of affecting the perception of the viewer.⁴⁴ The analysis is performed with the aim to understand in which ways light can affect the viewer, as well as presenting an art historical foundation of light as tool for narration. Katzberg suggests that light performs a coded mediation between the viewer, space, and artwork where the properties and spectral effects of light engages the viewer in a communicative and immersive viewing experience.⁴⁵ Katzberg, occupies himself mainly with light art which also functions as installation art and develops the concept of the viewer being either centralised or decentralised as developed by Claire Bishop, mainly focusing on vision and perception.⁴⁶

Professor Tim Edensor of University of Manchester explores light art regarding perception and sensation, through conducting a phenomenological analysis of selected works by James Turrell, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Olafur Eliasson, and Tino Seghal in 'Light Art, Perception, and Sensation' (2015). The analysis which is drawn from the author's 'own embodied and affective responses to these works and, on occasion, on the responses from other co-visitors' occupies itself with regarding light art which also falls under the premises of installation.⁴⁷ Edensor suggests how his empirical materials has a core in manipulation of light and space,

⁴¹ Similar ideas on the application on queer theory on abstract art can also be found in the exhibition catalogue *Lost and Found: Queering the Archive* in which J. Rowley & L. Wolthers state 'Queer also stands for a critical view of dominant essentialist definitions - socially, politically, and visually. Here queer or "queering" is a strategy, a way of being or looking at the world.'⁴²

⁴² J. Rowley, & L. Wolthers, 'Lost and Found: Queering the Archive' in M. Danbolt, J. Rowley & L. Wolthers eds., *Lost and Found: Queering the Archive*, exhibition catalogue, Copenhagen, Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 2009, p. 11.

⁴³ L. M., Katzberg, 'Cultures of light: contemporary trends in museum exhibition', PhD thesis, Amsterdam University, Amsterdam, 2009, p. 9, <<https://dare.uva.nl/search?arno.record.id=320192>>, accessed 20 March 2022.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 12.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* p. 60.

⁴⁷ T. Edensor, 'Light Art, Perception and Sensation', *The Senses and Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2015, p. 139.

concluding how the focus lies on ways of shaping and constructing light and space foreign to our normative apprehensions. Edensor's focus lies in perception which he discusses in relation to presence, spatiality, and temporality. Edensor has also authored the article 'Light design and atmosphere' (2015), in which he discusses the affects designing with light can have on atmospheres. Edensor's arguments are supported by Gernot Böhme's ideas on the creation and effect on atmospheres by electric lightning in diverse environments, as developed in his 2010 article 'On Beauty'.⁴⁸ Further interesting research conducted in the field of light art is conducted by Megan Friel, who in her undergraduate thesis explores the concept of sublimity in the art of the Light and Space movement. Friel bases her research on the notion of how Light and Space artists such as James Turrell, Robert Irwin, and Doug Wheeler '[...] create seemingly infinite hyper-minimalist installations comprised of nothing but space and light, whose presence is both abstract and concretely real.'⁴⁹ Friel connects the overwhelming and absorbing sensations of light art to the modernist sublime in abstract art, as reinterpreted by Theodor Adorno, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Francois Lyotard after Immanuel Kant. Friel poses an interesting theoretical approach regarding perception and sublimity, discussing light art in the perspective of aesthetic beauty and sublimity.⁵⁰

This thesis separates itself from previous research through the systematising of light art through diverse classifications, thus driving the discussing around the art form in regarding different appropriations and classifications. The method of studying light artworks through a variety of classifications allows for the thesis to emphasise the opportunities light art offers as artistic form, suggesting how diverse appropriations opens for discussions on how light art is perceived and experienced. Similarly, this thesis entails multiple methodological perspectives through the application of both objecthood and embodied simulation, differencing in the overall approach towards the artistic form compared to the presented previous research regarding light art. Furthermore, is the thesis not interested neither in taking the technical aspects of light artworks into account, nor light design in a museological context. Instead, does the thesis occupy itself with discussing the three-dimensional, corporeal, and immersive qualities of light art, thus entering a discussion on aesthetic experiences methodologically analysed through objecthood and embodied simulation.

⁴⁸ T. Edensor, 'Light design and atmosphere', *Visual Communication*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2015 pp. 331-332.

⁴⁹ M. Friel, 'Sublimity in the Art of the Light and Space Movement', *Explorations: The UC Davis Undergraduate Research Journal*, vol. 15, 2013.

⁵⁰ *ibid.* p. 11-13.

Thesis outline

The first chapter titled 'Light art's function and foundation' will introduce the foundation of light art as artistic form and movement through presenting acknowledged discussions and theorisations around light art, providing a contextualisation for light art as art form. The chapter will begin by introducing the classification of light art as sculpture, as appropriated by David J. Getsy on Dan Flavin's practice with support in Rosalind Krauss' ideas on sculpture in the expanded field. The second part of the first chapter will discuss light art in relation to the spectacle as developed by Guy Debord and light art's connections to installation art regarding embodiment, supported by the ideas of Claire Bishop. The final part of the chapter will discuss the 2010 European Commission tax ruling of a Dan Flavin artwork as not classifying as art, indicating how light art may not be seen as art at all. This discussion will be developed through ideas on anti-art as developed by George Dickie, relating to light art's minimal and ready-made qualities. The classifications will be tied to analyses of the empirical materials through objecthood. The chapter will highlight diverse discussions on possible classifications of light art, underlining the difficulties and opportunities in how we treat the artistic form.

The second chapter titled 'How light art affects space / how space affects light art' will build on the suppositions from the first chapter and will initially explore the concept of space in relation to sculpture. The two-parted chapter will initially study space in its triality of architectural, perceived, and experienced spaces and their relation to lightness and atmospheres as developed by Gernot Böhme. The argumentation will be supported by notions of considering pre-existing qualities and ambiences in spaces, developed by Michel Foucault and Sarah Robinson. The chapter will through revisiting the empirical materials explore how light art impact spaces and atmospheres and vice-versa through embodied simulation, building on the initial analyses conducted in the previous chapter. The second part of the chapter will develop on atmospheres and how these are experienced in the relation with lightness and darkness, introducing the additional empirical material *Zero Mass* (1972-73) by Eric Orr as exhibited at CC. The chapter will argue for the perspective of embodiment as relevant in our encounters with light art to allow for further exploration of the possibilities of seeing light art from a perspective beyond perception.

The thesis will conclude with a discussion of how the methodological perspective of objecthood may allow for a further understanding of the materiality, ready-made, and conceptual qualities of light art and how the approach of embodied simulation may allow for an increased engagement and consideration of the spatial, corporeal, and immersive qualities of

light art. Due to the complexity and variety of light art, this thesis will continuously argue for a multi-layered approach in the interpretation of light artworks, concluding how light art is subject of conceptual foundations and induces embodied responses, highlighted by the central roles played by space and visitor.

1 Light art's function and foundation

With a strong societal shift in the American post-war landscape, the 1960s saw increasing awareness and interest for individualism – ranging from sexual liberation, the civil rights movement, the expansion of consumerism, to feminism.⁵¹ Supported by technical advancement, societal progression, and pioneering artistic practice, light art became known as an established art form in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Following an abstract and minimalist tradition where the concepts of form, space, and dimension had been stripped and challenged, light art developed as a natural successor.⁵² The exploration and utilisation of lightness and darkness as optical effects are long-found traditions in the art historical canon. A classic example is *chiaroscuro*,⁵³ which can be found as a distinguished technique in Renaissance painting and Utrecht Caravaggism, where balance between strong contrasting light and darkness was applied to resemble depth. The technique heightens the intensity, creating a dramatic and attention-pulling effect. The technique of *chiaroscuro* stretches from two- to three-dimensional objects where the contrasts of lightness and darkness in three-dimensional objects contributes to achieving representations of space and volume.⁵⁴

In what ways can then light art be defined? Light art, also known as luminism, is a visual art form where artificial, electric, or (constructed) natural light functions as the main medium of expression.⁵⁵ Light art is usually divided into two sections: 1) three-dimensional abstract objects of sculptural elements emitting light,⁵⁶ and 2) a visual phenomenon created by projections and manipulations of light (usually electric).⁵⁷ The first definition passes light art into classifications of sculpture, focusing on the three-dimensional qualities of light art and from the origin of where the light is emitted. The second definition is vaguer, not addressing the source or origin of the light projected or emitted but focusing on the visual effects created. In this category we may also place artworks working with deprivation of light. Neither definition count for the impact or importance of the spaces, objects, or surroundings of the artwork. According to art historian David J. Getsy, light artist Dan Flavin rejected the singular

⁵¹ Getsy, loc. cit.

⁵² D. Willis, 'The Rise of "Middle Class" as an Ordinary American term', *The New York Times*, The Upshot, 14 May 2015, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/upshot/the-rise-of-middle-class-as-a-mainstream-description.html>>, accessed 27 February 2022.

⁵³ Chiaroscuro translates from Italian to light-dark.

⁵⁴ The National Gallery [website], 'Chiaroscuro', The National Gallery [website], n.d., Glossary, <<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/glossary/chiaroscuro>>, accessed 27 February 2022.

⁵⁵ M. Clarke, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, p. 148.

⁵⁶ Getsy, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 143, 148.

categorisation of his works as sculpture, alongside other minimalist artists. However, argues Getsy, has the acknowledgement of Flavin's early fluorescent works as sculpture contributed to the debate regarding the future or decay of the medium.⁵⁸

This three-parted chapter will introduce the foundation of light art as movement and art form, presenting commonly acknowledged discussions and classifications of light art. This chapter will portray light art from three perspectives: light art as sculpture, light art as spectacle, and light art as anti-art. The chapter aims to highlight diverse theoretical perspectives of light art and will tie the study to its empirical materials, which will be methodologically studied through the notion of objecthood as developed by art critic and art historian Michael Fried. The chapter will commence by regarding the formal and three-dimensional aspects of light art, introducing art theorist and professor Rosalind Krauss' established ideas on sculpture in the expanded field from the late 1970s. The connection to light art will be strengthened by introducing David J. Getsy's ideas on the sculptural and corporeal entities in Dan Flavin's practice. The second part will introduce theorisation around light art as spectacle and will through analyses of the empirical material from the perspective of objecthood explore the dynamic and immersive qualities of light art. The argumentation will be supported by theorisations of situation theorist Guy Debord and art historian Claire Bishop. The final part of the chapter will present the idea of seeing light art as anti-art, based on the 2010 European Commission ruling, where works by Dan Flavin were deemed not to be art, but categorised as 'lighting fittings' and thus subject for higher taxation.⁵⁹ This perspective will be supported by George Dickie's ideas on anti-art and ready-mades to initiate a discussion on light art and concept. The chapter will address the importance of the different classifications which underline the difficulties or opportunities in how we treat light art as artistic form. The chapter will suggest the importance of regarding light art as a three-dimensional art form which must impact its surrounding spaces, furthermore, emphasising the recognition of light art's foundation in conceptualism. The chapter will conclude with a suggestion of supplementary perspectives of recognising light art's historical and contextual value as a child of the 1960s and 1970s, in which form, concept, and to some extent provocation connects to the essence of abstract and minimal works of art.

⁵⁸ Getsy, loc. cit.

⁵⁹ M. Kennedy, 'Call that art? No, Dan Flavin's work is just simple light fittings, say EU experts', *The Guardian*, 20 December 2010, <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/dec/20/art-dan-flavin-light-eu>>, accessed 27 February 2022.

1.1 Light art is sculpture

‘Over the last ten years rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture [...]’ Rosalind Krauss writes 1979 in her *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*.⁶⁰ Presenting examples of sculpture which entails minimal, abstract, and land art features Krauss investigates the expansion and development of sculpture as medium. According to Krauss, the traditional logic of sculpture-making has been transformed. Following societal progression and thirst for individualism, the sculpture tradition in the late 1960s and early 1970s was to become heavily influenced by individual expression.⁶¹ Since Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917), sculpture had generally seen a broader definition during the 20th century, but the often raw and minimalist expressions of sculptures emerging in the late 1960s and 1970s further provoked the definition. Krauss believes that we all have clear definitions of what constitutes as sculpture, stating how heritage, societal, and cultural context all contribute to the development and definition of the medium.⁶² Sculpture, according to Krauss, ‘[...] has its own internal logic, its own set of rules, which, though they can be applied to a variety of situations, are not themselves open to very much change.’⁶³ These set of rules are composed by its three-dimensionality, its physical and physiological corporeality, as well as its relation to site.⁶⁴ Krauss uses this statement as further argumentation on how sculpture has repeatedly been redefined; from the removal of the pedestal to the decline of verticality, the essence of the sculpture is still manifested by its dimensionality. Krauss continues:

The logic of sculpture, it would seem, is inseparable from the logic of the monument. By virtue of this logic a sculpture is a commemorative representation. It sits in a particular place and speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place.⁶⁵

Without entering the discussion on monument, Krauss’ statement opens for a discussion about place and situation regarding sculpture as medium. Alongside dimensionality, both place and situation must account for how we as viewers understand and perceive sculpture. In the discourse of light artworks, David J. Getsy partly utilises Krauss’ substantial essay as a foundational base for his appropriation of Dan Flavin’s works as minimalist sculpture, partly due to

⁶⁰ R. Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’, *The MIT Press* [online journal], vol. 8 (Spring, 1979), October 1979, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/778224>> accessed 15 May 2013, p. 30.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ibid.*, p.33.

⁶⁴ B. H. D. Buchloh, ‘Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture’, *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 1983, vol. 10, The Art Institute of Chicago Centennial Lectures (1983), p. 276.

⁶⁵ Krauss, *loc. cit.*

‘[...] the ways in which it signals an expansion into spatial practices.’⁶⁶ Very much in line with Krauss’ analysis of the societal impact of the sculptural expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, Getsy claims that the definitions of the body, gender, and sex – like sculpture – moved into an expanded field. Sculpture, according to Getsy has an activated relationship to the human body that differs significantly from pictorial and other two-dimensional modes of representation.⁶⁷ This statement is based on the idea how representative two-dimensional works of art are three-dimensional realities deconstructed to fit on a plain surface. As three-dimensional objects, sculpture offers interaction with space and viewer on a more elevated level compared to two-dimensional works of art, on account of physicality and tangibility. Getsy believes this to be a core quality of sculpture as medium, whether the work is representative or abstract.⁶⁸



Figure 5: Dan Flavin, *Untitled*, 1996, (Installation view), Green, blue, pink, golden and ultraviolet light, Santa Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa, Milan, 2021, photo: Fondazione Prada.

Figure 6: Dan Flavin, *Untitled*, 1996, (Installation view), Green, blue, pink, golden and ultraviolet light, Santa Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa, Milan, 2021, photo: Amanda Johansson.

The appropriation of Dan Flavin’s works as minimalist sculpture also implicate the appropriation of other light artworks with similar qualities as sculpture. Hence, must the analysis of light artworks include the *internal logic* of sculpture: its three-dimensionality, its corporeality, and its relation to site or place. What then distinguishes light art from other types of sculpture is the discharge – in this case, electric light. In the classification of light artworks as sculpture, questions of physical limitations rise where one may find oneself asking: where does the sculpture end? In the example of Flavin’s site-specific work *Untitled*, 1996, (**Fig. 5**) installed in Santa Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa, south of Milan’s city centre, the blue light emitted from the

⁶⁶ Getsy, op. cit. p. 2.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

installed light tubes projects the entire church vault, thus creating an impact vastly beyond its physical limitations. In its emission of light, further activation and attention from both its surrounding spaces and inevitably, viewers, is demanded. The perception, impact, and dimensions of *Untitled*, 1996, also vary in its relation to its site as the lightworks behave differently depending on what time of day the visitor enters. When the sun has set, the fluorescent light immerses the space in bright reds, blues, and gold. During daytime however, the artwork must compete with daylight entering from the windows, barely making the lightworks visible (**Fig. 6**). This suggests a heightened level of connection and complex relationship between artwork and space due to light art's vividness (and in this case sensitivity), indicating that light art behaves differently than sculpture.

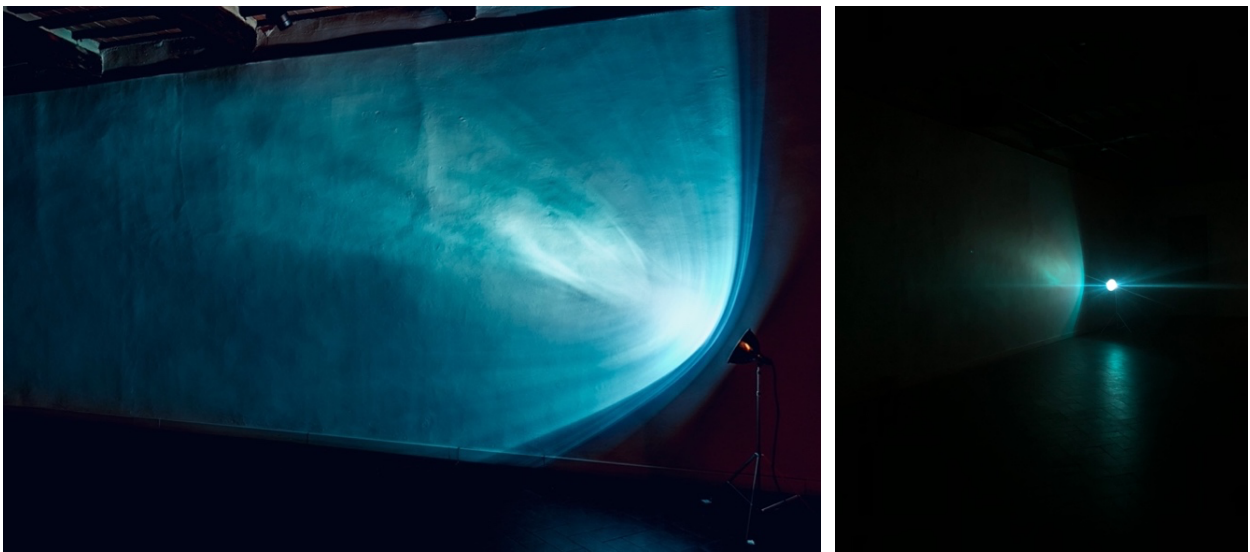


Figure 7: Ann Veronica Janssens, *Untitled (Light Painting)*, 2004, Lamp and tripod, blue light bulb, (Installation view), Casa Masaccio, Valdarno San Giovanni, 2021, photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNOstudio.

Figure 8: Ann Veronica Janssens, *Untitled (Light Painting)*, 2004, Lamp and tripod, blue light bulb, (Installation view), Casa Masaccio, Valdarno San Giovanni, 2022, photo: Amanda Johansson.

In the exhibition *Mehr Licht!* (2021), Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)*, 2004, can be found on the second floor of contemporary art centre Casa Masaccio, located in San Giovanni Valdarno (**Fig. 7 & 8**).⁶⁹ By performing analysis through objecthood, an establishment of the object's (artwork's) physical aspects will be considered, as well as acknowledging the influences of architectural settings, atmospheres, and ultimately beholder in the encounter with the empirical materials. The intimate sphere which is created around Janssens work has as much to do with the boldness of placement and statement of the work, as well as the overall experience of the exhibition room and venue itself. The large, barnlike room with exposed wooden beams is silent except for the constant buzz of an electric source. The muted echo of

⁶⁹ A town with less than 20.000 inhabitants on the outskirts of Florence, Italy.

footsteps on tiles spreads across the open space, and the eerie feeling of the half-shaded room manifests itself. The artwork, a free-standing 160-centimetre-tall tripod lamp made of steel is placed in the corner of the vast space. Although of three-dimensional form, the narrow, vertical lamp does not account for much weight or depth and creates an imbalance between the lightness of the lamp and the vastness of the emitted light. The turquoise bulb which is directed at a 45° angle towards the adjoining wall casts an intense blue illumination on the white plaster showing less and less intensity in brightness the further distance from the light source. The geometric qualities of the lamp, creating a diagonal line centrally from the lamp juxtapositions with the space's organic elements with natural materials present. Traditional connotations of the colour blue are towards feelings of stillness, solitude, waters, and skies, but the artificial bulb does not bring thoughts towards nature or feeling blue. In the darkness, the intense blue light brings connotations of police vehicles and rotating emergency vehicle lighting. The otherwise empty and unlit room strengthens these connotations where the sensation of danger might not be present, but the sensation of alertness. The ready-made features of the work are highlighted by the factor how the tripod lamp is actually functioning as a lamp, not having been modified or utilised differently than the object's original intension. Site, situation, and placement also references to the ready-made qualities of *Untitled (Light Painting)*, determining the functionality of the object. This signals what Prange refers to as 'original purity'.⁷⁰

In the example of Ann Veronica Janssens' *Untitled (Light Painting)* the classification of sculpture gets strengthened by its sculptural and three-dimensional qualities, but its ready-made features push the piece away from this classification. Additionally, as in the example of Flavin, questions regarding dimension rises. Is it the tripod lamp which constitutes as sculpture or must the lamp and light projection be seen as an inseparable entity, naming the entire phenomenon sculpture? Looking back at Krauss's *set of rules*, light emission and projection may not qualify seeing how they are neither three-dimensional, tangible, nor corporeal, suggesting that the sculpture ends in its tangible physical dimensions. A comparison which can be made towards other artworks classifying as sculpture may be the disregarding of the shades which a sculpture may cast – but in the case of light art, light emitted or projected is the essence of the art form. In the case of Dan Flavin's works, limits Getsy the definition of Flavin's practice to constituting of tubes and lighting fittings, thus only considering their tangible physicality, hence not addressing the product which light art creates – light.

⁷⁰ Prange, op. cit., p. 1215.

1.2 Light art is spectacle

With research indicating that the average viewer spend 28,63 seconds in front of works of art, the urge of pushing for higher levels of dynamism, immersiveness, or even set duration is unsurprising.⁷¹ Essentially an art form constructed of vibrant and effective qualities, light art is no exception. The notion of the spectacle is derived from situation theorist Guy Debord who in his 1967 *The Society of the Spectacle* introduces the term and concept. Debord argues for the societal developments in modern and post-modern society to have replaced authentic social life for its representation, arguing how appearance has substituted real living.⁷² Debord poses his argumentation on the spectacle around the notion of how mass production and mass media dominate society, which constrains life to being presented as an enormous accumulation of spectacles, stating how ‘[e]verything that was directly experienced has been replaced with its representation in the form of images.’⁷³ Debord develops:

Whereas directly lived experience is a continuum of emotion and sensation, there presentational life is a stream of images detached from their living context. The original context of this directly lived reality cannot be reestablished [*sic*]. Living a representational life has a *completely separate*, but unified experience unto itself that exists purely in thought. As reality is increasingly represented as images to be experienced by sight alone, eventually a *completely separate pseudo-world* of images emerges—where the “actual” reality is only represented, but never actually experienced; merely performed and eventually simulated. The horizon of this representational reality is one in which individuals merely witness an image of the world in fully autonomous non-lived lives.⁷⁴

In other words, poses Debord a shift in society where citizens no longer take part in ‘actual’ reality, but rather *live* though representation of images portrayed by mass media (also including social media in its contemporary terminology). The result is the living of a representational life where experiences become unified between individuals, existing merely in collective thought.⁷⁵ Although developed as societal critique, Debord’s ideas of the spectacle has inspired art historians Theodor W. Adorno, T. J. Clark and more contemporarily, art historian Dore Bowen and art critic Ossian Ward. In her article ‘Imagine There’s No Image (It’s Easy If You Try): Appropriation in the Age of Digital Reproduction’ (2006), Bowen explores the spectacle as developed by Debord through contemporary art and its relations to aesthetic experiences and embodiment. Bowen poses the question of how artists may utilise and take advantage of the concept of the

⁷¹ L. F. Smith, J. K. Smith, & P. P. L. Tinio, ‘Time spent viewing art and reading labels’, *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* [online journal], vol. 11, no. 1, 2017, p. 77, <<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-10247-001>>, accessed 4 March 2022.

⁷² G. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 4th edn, tr. R. Adams, Unredacted Word, Cambridge, 2021, p. 16.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 16-17.

spectacle to provoke bodily experiences connected to time, history, and presence.⁷⁶ With examples of post-modern performance and conceptualist artists including Cindy Sherman, Bill Viola, Joseph Beuys, and Valie Export, Bowen discusses the further embodied approach to the spectacle developed in the art scene of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Bowen, the motivation of exploring the relationship between image, performer, and/ or the viewer's body pushed for the new contemporary art practices of performance and installation art.⁷⁷ The type of spectacle art following this tradition would centre around bodily experiences, pushing for an increased impact on the viewer's bodily experiences. The result, according to Bowen, is a new reality created through the constructed relationships between art and viewer, in which:

Directly lived reality produces and absorbs the spectacle such that directly lived reality is no longer accessible, it creates a totality in which reality exists on both sides. [...] reality emerges in the spectacle, and the spectacle is reality.⁷⁸

Thus becomes the body of the viewer an integrated part of the spectacle, in which the *lived (aesthetic) experiences* become inseparable from the viewer's body.⁷⁹ Other interesting reflections include control of the viewer's time and presence in the aesthetic experience through duration. Bowen argues how, constructed on an analysis of how the Fluxus movement utilised duration as anticipation, '[...] duration is within the spectacle and not outside of it.'⁸⁰ Aesthetic experiences utilising duration, either statically or in motion, induce uncomfortable experiences with the viewer in which '[t]he audience and performer must literally endure time.'⁸¹ This, according to Bowen, results often in experiences of shock or boredom.⁸² Henceforth, is the notion of the spectacle utilised by art and artists to enforce the situation of the constructed reality which is created in the aesthetic experiences. Here, gets the body of the viewer centralised unable to escape the performance or installation which is contained by duration – enabling the insinuation of expected embodied experiences. These may include a variety of sensations including shock, boredom, or perplexation. Regarding light art, these instances are often noticeable in light art bordering installation. Light art installations of these sorts will in this thesis be referred to as altered sensory environments.

⁷⁶ D. Bowen, 'Imagine There's No Image (It's Easy If You Try): Appropriation in the Age of Digital Reproduction', in A. Jones ed., *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2006, p. 538.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 538-539.

⁷⁸ Debord, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁷⁹ Bowen, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 542.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

The spectacle, as addressed by Ossian Ward in *Ways of Looking: How to Experience Contemporary Art* (2014), refers to a category and sensation of spectacular works of art. The spectacle, according to Ward, is a reoccurring phenomenon in contemporary art where we as viewers expect to be seduced and astonished by what contemporary art has to offer. Unmatched size, dynamism, or shock in contemporary art may blind us from actually *seeing* the artwork as it is. Ward questions whether the viewer is being hindered by the spectacular qualities which directly address our bodily interactions, concerned that we no longer *look* at the artwork in front of us, but solely immerse ourselves in the experience.⁸³ Connecting Ward's ideas on the spectacle on contemporary art and Bowen's discussions on performance and installation art from the 1960s and 1970s, a joint insight is anchored in the notion of insinuated embodied experiences.

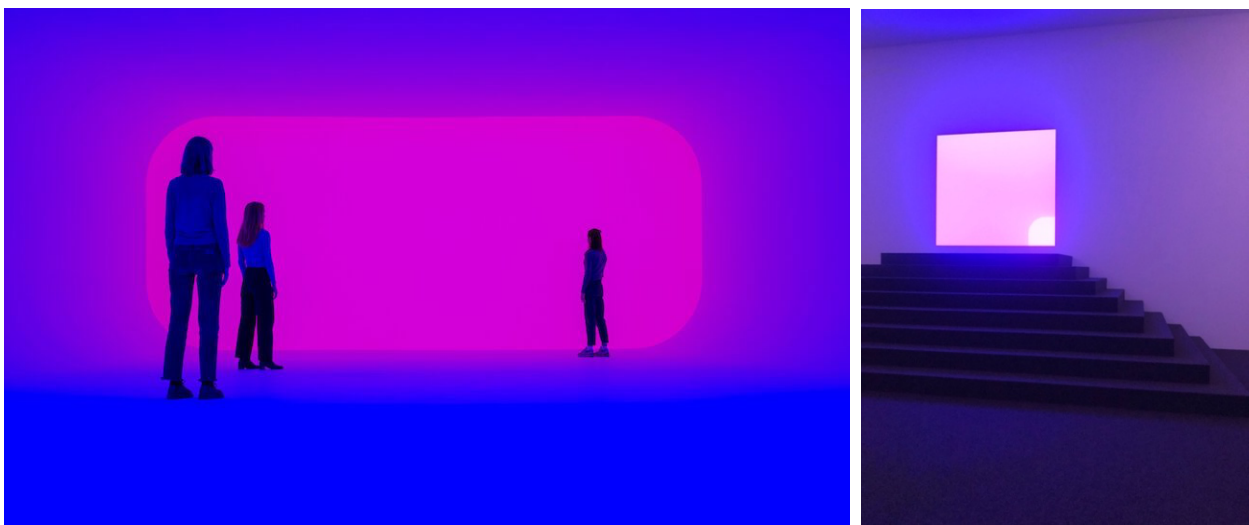


Figure 9: James Turrell, *Aftershock*, 2021, (Installation view), Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen, 2022, photo: Florian Holzherr.

Figure 10: James Turrell, *Aftershock*, 2021, (Installation view), Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen, 2022, photo: Amanda Johansson.

In the exhibition *Light & Space* (2021-22) presented at CC in Copenhagen, multiple examples which draws on the spectacle can be found. James Turrell's site-specific *Aftershock* (2021) is here presented as an example displaying high spectacular elements (**Fig. 9 & 10**). The aesthetic experience of *Aftershock* is under the hand of the artist and secondary, the institution, where the build-up before entering is as an important part of the experience as the time spent inside the altered sensory environment. Visitors are seated on plastic chairs outside of the barred installation space. After a wait between fifteen to forty-five minutes, six visitors at a time are welcomed into the first part of the installation – a space composed of white walls and grey carpeted floor, resembling a doctor's waiting room. To be allowed to enter the altered sensory environment, visitors are introduced to a set of instructions communicated by the staff: shoes are to be

⁸³ O. Ward, *Ways of Looking: How to Experience Contemporary Art*, Laurence King Publishing, London, 2014, pp. 127-128.

exchanged for white cotton foot covers, mobile phones are to be left outside, and the experience is to be enjoyed in silence and standing. As in the previous section which appropriated light art as sculpture, an analysis through objecthood will be performed. The approximately fifteen metres deep three-dimensional space is accessed via a square cut-out in the wall, elevated from the ground and accessed by a set of stairs. Upon entering the constructed space, the visitor completely immerses in the experience as the surrounding sounds from outside the altered sensory environment gets muffled. The installation space is backlit an arrangement of turquoise fluorescent lighting fittings attached to the wall around the entrance, spreading a soft blue light across the seemingly infinite white floor. The installation space and elements are defined by curved lines, bordering between organic and artificial. The width is slightly smaller than the depth of the space and the height approximately between three to four metres. The slightly tilted floors join the walls and ceiling seamlessly, pulling the visitors towards an ambiguous rectangle with rounded corners (also called a stadium or squirele). Visitors are not allowed to enter through the 'stadium' and are encouraged to a safe keep distance from to minimise the risk of falling into it. The 'stadium' acts as the main light source, initially emitting powerful and intense magenta light which gradually moves towards a cyan shade. The emitted light impacts all surrounding spaces completely and casts a monochrome light on the floor, walls, ceiling, and viewers. The monochrome lights gradually turn into rapidly pulsating strobe lights during two occasions of the 'light show', emitting a constant flicker, affecting the perception and balance of the viewer. After circa fifteen minutes are visitors promptly asked to exit the altered sensory environment.

The appropriation of *Aftershock* as spectacle initiates discussions on the centralised viewer (and body), controlled duration, and constructed space which relates to installation art. According to Claire Bishop, since the introduction of the term installation art in the 1960s, the differences and distinctions between *installation art* and *installation of works of art* has become vaguer. What distinguishes *installation art* from other types of art installations is that '[...] the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity.'⁸⁴ Thus may space and object not be disregarded from one another, insisting on being seen as an entity. Bishop states:

Installation art therefore differs from traditional media (sculpture, painting, photography, video) in that it addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space. Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an *embodied* viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Bishop, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

The inevitability of embodiment in installation art derives from the fact that the art form is unique in its way to not *represent* elements of light, texture or space as seen in classical mediums such as painting and sculpture, but actually *present* said elements. Thus, is an emphasis on sensory activation and physical participation initiated where the visitor must actively enter and move within the space to experience it.⁸⁶ Here, has the viewer no longer the choice of disengaging with the artwork, but must allow for the immersion into the world produced by the artist (and institution), thus enabling embodiment. According to Ward has the extravaganza we correlate with contemporary art and that of the spectacle developed from art's desire to impress and inspire our minds. This has resulted in pursuit of further dynamism to surprise and please art critics and viewers.⁸⁷

Qualities of both spectacle and installation art are prominent in Turrell's *Aftershock* in which embodied resonance, centred around the body of the viewer including set duration is present both prior to and during the 'performance'. The inclusion of additional ideas on installation art recognises the demand for the viewer's active presence within the space as a crucial aspect for the artwork. Furthermore, gets the centralisation around the viewer further elevated as viewers are instructed to enjoy, or endure, the experience standing. As Bishop addresses, embodiment is here not a secondary elevation, but the only and instant state of the viewer.⁸⁸ In the context of the spectacle, the experience of *Aftershock* becomes reality and represents the real lived experience. The experience connects to both the notion of the alienated and inseparable viewer and body where the premises of duration and corporeality in the installation binds it to the spectacle. Whilst falling under the categorisation of installation art, constituted Turrell's *Aftershock* the core of the Light and Space art and movement. Additionally, being one of the pioneering and highly esteemed artists of the movement, displays Turrell's practice of modelling and distorting light and space an essential function of light art as artistic form. Although undoubtable three-dimensional, *Aftershock* cannot fall under the classification of sculpture. Neither can it be said to be constructed of sculptural elements, nor closely related to site or monumentality.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ O. Ward, *loc. cit.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

1.3 Light art is not art

As with much art and mediums considered avant-gardist, thought-provoking, or difficult to define, debates have risen whether light art can be categorised as art at all. In 2010, a trial case between contemporary London-based art gallery Haunch of Venison and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs⁸⁹ sought to redefine the classifications of video installation works by Bill Viola and Dan Flavin's *Six alternating cool white/warm white fluorescent lights vertical and centred* (1973) for taxation and custom purposes to the EU.⁹⁰ The case rose several issues regarding the classifications of art and taxation, as 1) an explicit category for 'artworks' did not exist, thus were all art to be classified individually after medium, and 2) an explicit category for 'installations' or 'video installations' did not exist either. The existing classifications of 'original sculptures and statuary, in any material' were imported at a rate of 5%, and thus not liable for additional customs duties.⁹¹ In the case of Viola's video installations, argued Haunch of Venison at the hearing that a sculpture should be understood as 'all three-dimensional artistic productions, irrespective of the techniques and materials used', thus arguing for Viola's video installations indeed being three-dimensional.⁹² Although statements were provided from eminent art critics and professionals in favour of Viola's work to be considered as a single three-dimensional entity only after being assembled, the court ruled how '[n]one of the individual components or the whole installation, even when assembled, can be considered as a sculpture.'⁹³ In the case of Dan Flavin, this discussion was not applied on *Six alternating cool white/warm white fluorescent lights vertical and centred*⁹⁴ which was accepted as three-dimensional due to arriving to customs as a single unit and thus not in need of assembling to become three-dimensional.⁹⁵ However, was the work still not recognised as sculpture but would instead be classified as 'chandeliers and other electrical ceiling or wall lighting fittings'.⁹⁶ The European Commission stated, '[c]lassification as a sculpture is excluded, as it is not the installation that constitutes a

⁸⁹ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs is a department of the UK Government responsible for the collection of taxes.

⁹⁰ Kennedy, loc. cit.

⁹¹ M. P. Markellou, 'Rejecting the works of Dan Flavin and Bill Viola: revisiting the boundaries of copyright protection for post-modern art', *Queen Mary Journal of Intellectual Property*, vol. 2 no. 2, 2012, p. 175-176.

⁹² *ibid.* p. 178.

⁹³ *ibid.* p. 177.

⁹⁴ Although discussed and debated in journalism, legal papers, and art historical writings, **(Fig. 11)** displays the only image found in this research of Dan Flavin's *Six alternating cool white/warm white fluorescent lights vertical and centred* (1973), here installed at the Lisson Gallery, London 1974. After being in contact with the librarian at the archive of Hayward Gallery, the research has encountered difficulties in locating images from the Dan Flavin retrospective at the Hayward Gallery in 2006 and have displayed the second image **(Fig. 12)** as a very similar setup of the artwork can be found in the catalogue *Dan Flavin: A retrospective* (2006) accompanying the exhibition, seen as a fair representation of Flavin's practice.

⁹⁵ Markellou, loc. cit.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 176.

“work of art” but the result of the operations (the light effect) carried out by it.”⁹⁷ The ruling resulted in any Dan Flavin works from outside of the EU to be liable of paying full taxation of 17.5 percent at the time of the ruling compared to the 5% VAT placed on sculpture.⁹⁸ The 2010 European Commission ruling was followed by a wave of reactions both within the artworld and amongst EU politicians who believed the European Commission’s definition of art to be out-dated, and according to Pierre Valentin, lawyer representing Haunch of Venison, ‘a patently absurd piece of legislation’.⁹⁹

In the European Commission ruling of Flavin’s work, it was explicitly stated that classification as sculpture was excluded, arguing how it was not the installation (here interpreted as ‘installation of art’ rather than ‘installation art’) which constituted ‘a work of art’, but the result of the operation (the lighting effect) carried out by it (the lighting fittings). This must then be interpreted as the physical ‘lighting fittings’ not being the artwork, but the light which is produced by them: ‘the lighting effect’. Hence, in the reasoning of the European Commission ruling, can the work of Flavin 1) only being considered a ‘a work of art’ when turned on and emitting light, or 2) only considering the emitted light ‘a work of art’, disregarding the inevitable source from which the light is emitted.



Figure 11: Dan Flavin, *Six alternating cool white/warm white fluorescent lights vertical and centred*, 1973, (Installation view), Lisson Gallery, London, 1974, photo: Lisson Gallery London.

Figure 12: Dan Flavin, *the nominal three (to William of Ockham)*, 1963, (Installation view), Dia Art Foundation, New York, 2013, photo: Billy Jim.

Historically, brings the tax ruling by the European Commission recollections to the example of a similar situation regarding Constantin Brancusi’s *Bird in Space* (1923-40). In 1926 faced art collector Edward Steichen full 40% taxation upon import to the United States as the sculpture

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ R. J. Tischler, ‘The Power to Tax Involves the Power to Destroy: How Avant-Garde Art Outstrips the Imagination of Regulators, and Why a Judicial Rubric Can Save It’, *Brooklyn Law Review*, vol. 78, no. 1, 2012, p. 1666.

⁹⁹ Markellou, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

were to be classified as 'Kitchen Utensils and Hospital Supplies', compared to the otherwise 0% taxation on art.¹⁰⁰ Financed by heir and art collector Peggy Guggenheim (whose undated bronze-version of *Bird in Space* is displayed at her former home Palazzo Venier dei Leoni in Venice), Brancusi and Steichen brought the ruling to court. In 1928, it was ruled that although not entailing the classical traits of a bird, classified indeed the shape, dynamism, and highly ornamental features of the piece as art. In addition, it was stated that the sculpture was an original production by a professional artist who was part of a 'new school' which no longer aimed at representation, but presentation.¹⁰¹ Legend says that part of the court's decision was based on the obvious zero functionality of the object. Hence, it must be art.

The pursuit of defining what is art and what is not, is not a novel discussion. In the 1960s and 1970s, around the same time as the emerging of the Light and Space movement, institutional art critique was introduced by writers and philosophers Arthur C. Danto and George Dickie. In their writings they posed questions such as 'What is the artworld?', 'What is art?', and thus following 'What is Anti-Art?'. The discussion of anti-art,¹⁰² is often traced back to Marcel Duchamp and his ready-mades, as well as the more contemporary example of Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* (1964) as they tick one or several of the four qualities which Dickie poses as types of anti-art:

1) art in which chance plays a part, 2) art which has strikingly unusual content, 3) "ready-mades," and 4) actions by "artists" which do not result in any object-product.¹⁰³

Placing Dan Flavin's practice in the category of anti-art would connect to the second and third type of anti-art as posed by Dickie, bordering between having strikingly unusual content and being ready-mades. The ready-made qualities are in fact one of the core issues of the 2010 European Commission ruling, as Flavin's work technically constitutes of 'chandeliers and other electrical ceiling or wall lighting fittings'. The question whether these 'lighting fittings' only become 'a work of art' once illuminated, is an interesting aspect in the overall discussion on light art. The 1966 work *Lampada annuale* (Annual Lamp) by Alighiero Boetti (**Fig. 13**) plays accurately with this concept. The self-standing work consists of a light bulb placed inside



Figure 13: Alighiero Boetti, *Lampada annuale*, 1966, wood, metal, glass lightbulb and electric device, photo: Archivio Alighiero Boetti.

¹⁰⁰ Markellou, op. cit., p. 178.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² Anti-art is a term used to describe art that challenges the accepted definitions of art, or which does not take a traditional role of being defined as art.

¹⁰³ G. Dickie, 'What is Anti-Art', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1975, p. 420.

a dark blue wooden box with internal walls covered by reflective metal. The box is sealed at the top with a clear glass sheet.¹⁰⁴ Hidden within the artwork is a complex clockwork set to only illuminate the bulb once a year, for a duration of eleven seconds at a random instance determined by the mechanism. This utmost minimalist arte povera artwork plays with the suspension of the unlikely event that the viewer will be present in the extreme rare case of illumination, manifesting ideas of fortune, presence, and volatility.¹⁰⁵ The example of Boetti connects poetically to the question regarding the necessity of illumination of light artworks, as *Lampada annuale* and its strong concept demonstrates that the essence of light art may not be illumination, but the concept. Similarly to *Lampada annuale* emphasises the practice of Dan Flavin the recognition of light art's relations to minimalism and conceptualism, where the *value* of the artwork may not lie in the display or execution but indeed in its rich conceptual and/ or aesthetic expressions. Being a child of the 1960s and 1970s, the recognition of light art's conceptual and partially provocative features attuned with social development may allow for increased appreciation of the artistic form. Light art advocates how light itself can be seen as concept. This supplementary level to our interpretations of light artworks allows them to be seen not only for their materiality or impact on their surroundings, but places them in their contextual and canonical situation. Conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth summarises in his *Art After Philosophy and After: collective writings, 1966-1990*:

It follows then that understanding and consideration of it as an art work [*sic*] is necessary *a priori* to viewing it in order to 'see' it as a work of art. Advance information about the concept of art and about an artist's concepts is necessary to the appreciation and understanding of contemporary art.¹⁰⁶

This chapter has introduced the foundation of light art as art form and movement through presenting acknowledged discussions and theorisations around light art. The chapter has initiated by introducing the classification of light art as sculpture, as appropriated by David J. Getsy on Dan Flavin's practice with support in Rosalind Krauss' ideas on sculpture in the expanded field, tying the argumentation to Ann Veronica Janssens' *Untitled (Light Painting)*. The second part of the chapter presented the classification of light art as spectacle and its connections to installation art regarding embodiment as can be found in the work *Aftershock* by James Turrell, supported by the ideas of Guy Debord and Claire Bishop. The third part of the chapter discussed the 2010 European Commission ruling of Dan Flavin's *Six alternating cool white/warm white*

¹⁰⁴ A. de Roquemaurel, 'Alighiero Boetti (1940-1994) Lampada annuale', *Christie's* [website], 2011, <<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5459637>>, para. 3-4, accessed 24 March 2022.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ J. Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy and After: collective writings, 1966-1990*, The MIT Press, Cambridge & London, 1991, p. 23.

fluorescent lights vertical and centred as not classifying as sculpture, but as ‘chandeliers and other electrical ceiling or wall lighting fittings’, thus being applicable for full VAT taxation. This discussion has been sustained by ideas on anti-art as developed by George Dickie, relating to light arts frequently minimal and ready-made qualities, arguing for how the interpretation of light art may be supplemented by acknowledging the art form’s connections to minimalism and conceptualism, stating how light in itself may be seen as a concept.

The chapter has highlighted diverse discussions on possible classifications of light art, underlining the difficulties and opportunities in how we treat light art as art form. The chapter suggests that disregarding the specific classification in which we place light art, light art is indeed a three-dimensional art form which must affect and impact its surrounding spaces in a variety of ways. The chapter argues for an awareness and consideration of the notion of conceptualism in the discussion of light art as art form, connected to light art’s historical and contextual value as a child of the 1960s and 1970s, in which concept connects to the essence of abstract and minimal works of art. The supposition of light art as three-dimensional art form which must affect its surrounding spaces in this chapter will lie as a foundation for the argumentation in the subsequent chapter. Further analysis of spaces and atmospheres in regard to the empirical materials will be performed through an approach of embodiment, building on the conducted analyses through objecthood. This will allow for an inclusion of perspectives of corporeality and an underlining of the importance of bodily senses and understandings beyond vision.

2 How light art affects space / how space affects light art

The importance and elevation of *space* is a central feature of light art. In the Light and Space movement, the term lies imbedded within the title, indicating an equalised relationship between light and space. Commonly, Light and Space artists, much like contemporary artists working with light art, often strive towards manipulation or distortion of space through different techniques. Examples of how this is performed are through solely working with light objects (light artworks), as in the examples of Dan Flavin and Ann Veronica Janssens, or as in the case of James Turrell (and the coming example of Eric Orr's *Zero Mass*) in the creation of altered sensory environments. Regarding the classifications which have been presented in the previous chapter where light art was appropriated as sculpture, spectacle, or as anti-art, connections and relations to space can be deduced from the classifications. Especially within the realm of sculpture in its internal logic and relation to site and place. However, will this thesis argue for a necessity of further analysing space in the context of light art and light(ness), due to the impact light has on spaces, atmospheres, and viewer.

With a foundation in empathy theory and *Einfühlung*,¹⁰⁷ the neurobiological findings of motor-sensory mirror neurons in the late 1980s and early 1990s have resulted in neurobiological proof that humans (and other primates) possess the ability to embody experiences external to our own bodies.¹⁰⁸ Embodied simulation is an approach founded in human motor behaviour, suggesting the body becoming the main point of reference in aesthetic experiences. This body-related experiential knowledge allows for us to indulge in the bodily presence and awareness of our body, as well as relating corporeally both with other subjects and objects we encounter.¹⁰⁹ The reasoning behind embodied simulation and the connection to aesthetic experiences lies in the comprehension and realisation of 1) how humans relate to aesthetic objects and cultural artefacts through a level of object-production, as we understand and connect to the creation process. Thus is a form of inter-subjectivity established in which the viewer of the artefact can connect with the intention, creation, and execution of said artefact, through empathic understanding for its producer, and 2) how what we *see* is not only connected to vision, but it is the result of a complex construction of the brain in which we include the contribution

¹⁰⁷ The conceptual development of empathy theory stems from *Einfühlung*, a German term translating to in-feeling or feeling-into, suggesting how we in our relations with objects, situations, or other subjects can relate or feel-into their experienced situation.

¹⁰⁸ V. Gallese, 'Embodied simulation: From neurons to phenomenal experience', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 4, 2005, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

of our body (movement and corporeal three-dimensionality). These include our senses and emotions, as well as dreams, imagination, and memories. Vision, according to neuroscientist and developer of embodied simulation theory Vittorio Gallese, is a complex experience which transcends visual impact and is thus as connected with the perceived, as with the perceiver.¹¹⁰ The approach of embodied simulation will allow for an elevated focus on corporeal awareness and initiate discussions of how light art resonates with corporeality and bodily senses in extension to vision and perception. Gallese summarises:

Embodied simulation theory uses a notion of embodiment according to which mental states or processes are embodied because of their bodily format [...]. The bodily format of a mental representation constrains what such mental representation can represent because of the bodily constraints posed by the specific nature of the human body. Similar constraints apply both to the representations of one's own actions, emotions or sensations and to those of others. Hence, embodied simulation is the reuse of mental states and processes involving representations that have a bodily format.¹¹¹

In other words, stem embodied simulation from the physical body of the viewer when experiencing and comprehending situations. This notion is applicable in aesthetic experiences, which allows for a methodological inclusion of the three-dimensionality of the body beyond vision in the analysis of the empirical materials. Similarly, argues Gallese how spatial awareness are connected to mirror neurons. Although action is controlled by motor neurons, do the neurons also respond to visual impact, physical touch, and auditorial stimuli – as long as they are related to the body. These ‘motor circuits’ control how we move and understand spaces around us, allowing for the determining of distances and limits through our individual bodily understandings.¹¹²

This two-parted chapter will initially build on the argumentation presented in the previous chapter by an exploration of the concept of space in relation to sculpture, discussing art theorist Rosalind Krauss’ ideas of the internal rules of sculpture. Due to light arts three-dimensional and sculptural qualities will Krauss’ ideas on place act as a starting point, connecting how the ideas of site and sitelessness in the modernist sculpture tradition may be applicable on light art. The first section of this chapter will suggest a complicated relationship between three-dimensional artworks, site, and space as understood through the logic of the sculpture. Here will ideas on predefined qualities of architectural space as explored by philosopher Michel Foucault and architect Sarah Robinson be introduced. Space will consecutively be explored in its argued triality of architectural, perceived, and experienced space, introducing theorisations

¹¹⁰ Gallese, 2019a, p. 118.

¹¹¹ *ibid.* p. 115.

¹¹² V. Gallese, ‘The Empathic Body in Experimental Aesthetics – Embodied Simulation and Art’, in V. Lux, S. Weigel eds., *Empathy*, 1st ed, Palgrave Studies in the Theory and History of Psychology, 2017, p. 186.

by Gernot Böhme regarding lightness and the creation of space, exploring Böhme's concepts and terminology in the discussion. Here will the empirical material of James Turrell's *After-shock* (2021) be revisited to explore how light art impact spaces and vice-versa through embodied simulation. The second part of the chapter will further explore the creation of atmospheres and how these are developed, or dependant of, the subject-object relationship. Here, will Ann Veronica Janssen's *Untitled (Light Painting)* (2004) be revisited, highlighting the atmospherical impacts through embodiment. Lastly, will spaces and atmospheres be explored additionally through the concepts of lightness and darkness, introducing the empirical material *Zero Mass* (1972-73) by Eric Orr as exhibited at CC. The chapter will highlight the bodily and sensory experiences of light art and the impact of light and lightness on spaces and environments it creates or occupies. This is performed to further challenge the appropriations of light art as sculpture, spectacle, or as not being art, arguing for the remarkable impact of light on spaces, atmospheres, and viewers. The chapter will argue for an inclusion of the perspective of embodiment in our encounters with light art to investigate the opportunities of seeing light art from a perspective beyond vision and perception.

2.1 Space and illumination

Regarding how light art emits or cast light external to its physical limitations is the art form bound to impact and affect its surrounding spaces. Emission of light heightens the level of interaction with architectural elements, environments (atmospheres), and ultimately viewers as light is an inevitable phenomenon. How can we then explore space in terms of the qualities of light art?

Although not constrained to a classification of sculpture does the three-dimensional and sculptural qualities of light art suggest a close relationship of how space is treated in the discourse of sculpture. Revisiting Krauss' *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979), Krauss argues for how the importance of space is as tangible in art which is either separable or inseparable of its physical placement.¹¹³ Krauss develops her argumentation around the significance of space based on land art and site-specific artworks, stating how sculpture is inseparable from *place*. Krauss argues how the logic of the sculpture follows the logic of the monument, claiming, '[i]t sits in a particular place and speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use

¹¹³ Krauss, loc. cit.

of that place.¹¹⁴ The word place holds an interesting duality which can connote both to physical space, as well as situation or context (placement). Krauss argues how historically, sculpture has been closely tied to its placement, referencing to how our understanding and appreciation of Bernini's statue *The Vision of Constantine* (1670) is as connected to its monumental placement in the Scala Regia,¹¹⁵ as to the sculpture itself. The monumental placement benefits according to Krauss from being considered not only through its physical site but also through its religious tradition and impactful context in which the greatness of the sculpture and site evolves.¹¹⁶ This notion, however, has seen a shift in the modernist sculpture tradition. The introduction of sculpture reproduction and a higher degree of mobility in modernist sculpture has contributed to a higher level of sitelessness, resulting in the sculpture obtaining a higher level of self-reference.¹¹⁷ Even though modernist and contemporary sculpture tradition has seen a loss of site, are the results increased complexities in sculptures relation to spatiality. Not residing in a constant state or place invites the sculpture to communicate with its temporary spaces, resulting in a plurality in its spatial relations. This argumentation connects to free-standing light art where dimensions often are variable, as can be seen in the example of Ann Veronica Janssens *Light Painting (Untitled)* (2004) (**Fig. 7 & 8**). Thus, must the artwork initiate new relationships with, and to, its surroundings when placed in new sites or spaces. Therefore, is it not only impact on the space created by the light artwork which must be taken into consideration, but also the impact of which the space has on the artwork. Here, a two-way relationship is formed which bears additional significance in the direct aesthetic experience of the viewer.

As in the example of Bernini's *The Vision of Constantine* (1670), placement and space does not merely refer to architecture, but also indicates tradition, context, and atmospheres. In the essay *Of Other Spaces* (1997), argues Michel Foucault for the importance of recognising the works of phenomenologists who have introduced the idea how the spaces we occupy are neither homogenous nor empty but in fact are saturated by a set of qualities.¹¹⁸ Foucault suggests how spaces may even be encompassed by a 'spectral aura'.¹¹⁹ Following a phenomenological tradition, is space for Foucault not a tabula rasa, but rather entails a certain set of relations and qualities which occupants or visitors are met with upon entering a space. Foucault writes:

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ The Scala Regia (translates from Italian to Royal Staircase) were designed by Bernini and are situated in the Vatican City as part of the formal entrance to the Vatican.

¹¹⁶ Krauss, *op. cit.* p. 33-34.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Foucault, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

In other words, we do not live in a sort of vacuum, within which individuals and things can be located, [...], but in a set of relationships that define positions which cannot be equated or in any way superimposed.¹²⁰

Similar deductions can be found in Sarah Robinson's article 'Resonant Bodies in Immersive Space' (2020) where Robinson cultivates the ideas of pre-set qualities in space and how space can be experienced through other senses than vision (here, through auditory perception), eventually distinguishing space as a medium.¹²¹ According to Robinson, are we as humans both physically and existentially rooted and can therefore not properly refer to the body, without also referring to the space in which it dwells.¹²² Robinson underlines how space is not a neutral backdrop waiting to be populated by our actions, presence, and desires, but holds a qualitative and expressive character of its own. These pre-existing qualities impact our thoughts and actions, ultimately moulding our desires with the space's.¹²³ What does this then mean for aesthetic experiences? In the elevation of space, considering it medium or not, implies an elevation in the corporeal relations and understandings in aesthetic experiences as we utilise the body to relate with spaces, as previously highlighted by Gallese regarding embodied simulation. This furthermore suggests a perspective of regarding and including other bodily senses in addition to vision (and thus visual perception) as we do not only relate to spaces and their pre-existing qualities through visual comprehensions but through our three-dimensional corporeality, movements, and senses. The notion of pre-existing qualities of space will be further developed in the chapter section on atmospheres, following the initial chapter section which explores space and lightness.

2.1.1. Perceived and experienced space

Space, as terminologically utilised by both Foucault and Robinson are defined as physically limited spaces with architectural boundaries but is a term which can be redefined based on the discourse. To concretise, an example will follow. The division between indoors and outdoors is established in the physical limitations constructed of walls, doors, and windows but if the walls were to be torn down, indoor and outdoor space would merge resulting in the distinguished separation ceasing to exist. Entering the discussion on light and the impact which light has upon space, Böhme poses interesting ideas on light in perceived and experienced spaces in his 2014 essay 'Light and Space. On the Phenomenology of Light'. In the discussion on light

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ S. Robinson, 'Resonant Bodies in Immersive Space', *Architectural Design*, vol. 90, no. 6, 2020, p. 31.

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ *ibid.*

and perceived or experienced spaces, Böhme offers a phenomenological account of the diverse ways of which light is experienced through bodily senses. Böhme states ‘[s]pace is created not only by walls but also by light, alignment and perspective, not only by stone cornices and cantilevered balconies but also by illumination.’¹²⁴ In this concise statement, argues Böhme for light not only interfering or impacting space, but that light indeed *creates* space. This due to illumination and perspective which allows for the appreciation of depth and distances in spaces. Discussing relations between light and space, defines Böhme the term space as not simply referring to architectural or physical space but argues how it may also refer to ‘perceived space’ or ‘experienced space’.¹²⁵ Although utilised synonymously by Böhme, the thesis will argue for a distinction between the two. Perception may comply as one type of understanding of space mainly connected to visual comprehensions through the sense of sight. Experienced space on the other hand, will in this thesis be understood as corporeal comprehensions of space created through vision but also in the addition of other bodily senses and ultimately embodiment. Hence, can space also be understood as *architectural, perceived, or experienced*. This is referred to in this thesis as the triality of space.

Although stated as presenting a phenomenological account of various ways in which light can be experienced through our senses, an establishment of the importance of vision is found throughout Böhme’s rhetoric and argumentation.¹²⁶ Böhme continuously addresses experiences of space, as well as light, through the means of perception. On the importance of visual perception states Böhme, ‘[t]he possibility of perceiving spatial depth with our eyes may be decisive for our actual awareness of being within a space.’¹²⁷ Two notions are hereby presented, 1) spatial depth is perceived through vision rather than being corporeally experienced, and 2) perception and comprehension of depth in spaces may be crucial for our awareness of being present within a space. Hence, does Böhme insinuate visual perception as a core instrument in our understanding and appreciation of spaces. Böhme utilises distinctions of how light is experienced in spaces as part of his terminology and argumentation. ‘Light-cleared space’ is what Böhme names spaces which are created by the effect of light, or brightness. What these light-cleared spaces, or illuminated spaces, offer is according to Böhme the ability for the subject to perceive boundaries (distances) both intersubjectively and towards objects.¹²⁸ Thus, are we in illuminated spaces (light-cleared space) able through vision to distinguish space, depth,

¹²⁴ G. Böhme, ‘Light and Space. On The Phenomenology of Light’, *Dialogue and Universalism*, no. 4, 2014, p. 6.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 5.

¹²⁷ *ibid.* p. 10.

¹²⁸ *ibid.* p. 9.

and distances in comparison to un-illuminated spaces. These possibilities are attained because of the existence of contouring by shadows (darkness), here acting as a parameter which indicates depth and distances. One example of light-cleared space addressed by Böhme is daylight which although having a limitlessness in its existence, has spatial characters which distinguish the space. These spatial characteristics are realised as the illumination and brightness created by sunrise, will continuously cease at sundown.¹²⁹ The light-cleared space, as in the example of daylight, is not constricted to its light source (here, the sun), is rather determined in its presence as experienced through brightness (the effect of daylight). Böhme argues for the possibility of seeing light-cleared spaces as ‘objects’ which are separated from our subjectivity and thus dependant on the relationality between ‘object’ and subject. Böhme summarises:

Light-cleared space is the space I am in and I experience my presence in it in a specific way through brightness. It is, however, also possible to view light-created space as if from outside, as a kind of “object.”¹³⁰

In seeing the phenomenon of light-cleared space as a type of ‘object’, Böhme names this ‘light-space’, advocating for this phenomenon being noticed due to light techniques. Thus are these lightspaces often represented in light art, especially in the practice of James Turrell.¹³¹ On the experience of lightspaces, argues Böhme for a resemblance to a state of dreaming, due to the removal of material objects. In lightspaces is it the *experience of brightness* which is constrained to being seen as the object. This notion of illuminated space being seen as the object, is what Böhme believes to be the source of what is experienced as annoying or even frightening in the type of altered sensory environments as created by Turrell.¹³²

2.1.2 *The expected embodied experience*

Already stated as a key concept for the Light and Space movement, is the manipulation of light and space utmost recognised in the practice of James Turrell. In the previous discussion presented in chapter one relating Turrell’s *Aftershock* (2021) to the spectacle, key notions rose including the constructed space, controlled duration, and distortion of perception. An additional analysis through embodiment in which developments of the ideas on space (including perceived and experienced space), atmospheres, and ultimately corporeality will allow for an experiential account of the artwork. Prior to entering Turrell’s *Aftershock* (**Fig. 9 & 10**), visitors are

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.* p. 11.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

informed to wait patiently on foldable plastic chairs forming a line along the exterior installation wall. Invigilators inform the queue that they will be subjects to a forty-five minute long wait prior to accessing the installation. As the queue moves forward, stool by stool, visitors are eventually greeted into the first room of the installation. Although not technically part of *After-shock*, the clinical atmosphere of the space resembling a doctor's waiting room encourages the build-up. Shoeless and wearing white cotton foot coverings, visitors make their way up the stairs into a cut-out square through the wall. Slightly tilted floors ease the approaching towards the main light source, a cuboid of sorts placed adjoint to the back wall of which a vast block of magenta colour emerges. The seamless floors, turned into walls, turned into ceiling are all tinted with the deep magenta. There is no object to place your vision, and the eyes wander across the void of colour, slowly shifting from magenta to cyan. The cyan light intensifies in the tunnel-like space, tinting the skin turquoise. Rapidly pulsating strobes initiate, creating a temporary blinding experience which induces nausea and distortion of time and space. The clinical atmosphere is constantly present, re-enforced by the instructions of duration and requirement of enjoying, or enduring, the experience standing. The referral of the experience as 'enduring light' names indeed the experience just.¹³³ Subtle, yet intense, strobes push for a visual effect similar to the blinding sensation of driving through a blizzard where the eye desperately seeks for a focal point not to lose balance. The sea sickness-inducing experience places the viewer in the relational state of lightspace in which the object is experienced immersively and corporeal. In the experience of *Aftershock*, the viewer struggles to assess both the physicality of the light source and the relations of distance and depth merely through sight. The analysis of *Aftershock* through an embodied experience allows for the exploration of corporeal impacts on the viewer where space and atmospheres play significant roles in the overall aesthetic experience. The vision becomes subject of distortion, pushing for further bodily activations as visual perception gets unreliable due to being obstructed and impaired.

Developing on the notions between light, space, and atmospheres, Böhme addresses the pure light phenomena in *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (2017) in which Turrell's practice of creating altered sensory environments again is utilised as an example of displaying totality of lightness.¹³⁴ The pure light phenomena address non-material manifestations of light. Although originating from a source, such as moon light originating from the moon or sun light originating from the sun, the actual object in the pure light phenomena is perceivably irrelevant. This allows instead for the light manifestation to become the object, disregarded from its source,

¹³³ G. Thomas, 'Enduring Light', *Aesthetica Magazine* [online journal], 14 January 2022, < <https://aestheticamagazine.com/enduring-light/>>, accessed 20 May 2022.

¹³⁴ Böhme, 2017, p. 199.

as in the case of the aurora borealis.¹³⁵ The pure light phenomena are here interpreted as the experiences of lightspace as object. Although, according to Böhme, are these natural manifestations (moon light, sun light and aurora borealis) not seen as totalities as they are limited by the impact of space. Light art on the other hand, manages in its shapelessness and diffused contact with its source of light to become a totality in its impact on space, thus accomplishing pure light phenomena.¹³⁶ The altered sensory environment of Turrell's *Aftershock* is perceived as a totalitarian of light which consumes all architecturally recognisable elements of space (walls, volume, distance). Neither are any indications of cast of light in physical spaces present as no shadows or reflections are derived from the 'object'. This demonstration of pure light phenomena manages to encompass and intrude the entire field of vision and perception of the viewer. Böhme analyses a James Turrell work exhibited at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover in which the viewer placed their head inside a hood completely immersed in a space of colour. Böhme writes:

For what he saw [the viewer], an indefinite vast color [*sic*] space without contours of any kind, was capable of cutting him off from reality completely. As fascinating as the vision was, one felt threatened by it.¹³⁷

Much resembling the phenomenon of *Aftershock*, the complete immersiveness in this seemingly unrestricted vastness of colour and light has, according to Böhme, managed to remove the subject completely from reality. Interestingly, looking back on the appropriation of *Aftershock* as spectacle, would the aesthetic experience account for a new reality constructed between artwork and viewer, in which the body of the viewer becomes inseparable from the aesthetic experience.¹³⁸ Regarding both theoretical perspectives argues this thesis for the manipulation of perception which is succeeded both through the constructed space and controlled light, providing certain, or even inevitable, forms of embodiment. Although the viewer is situated within an aesthetic experience and thus experiences the artwork external to how we normally would perceive reality, will the induced embodied experiences account for the creation of a new reality. This is argued on bases how the phenomenologically embodied experiences of *Aftershock* become intrusive to the extent that the body now dwells in a new reality – determined by the space and light, as well as the distortion of vision and other bodily functions such as balance. This compromised perception and balance is assumingly not endurable in case of long exposure,

¹³⁵ *ibid.* p. 197.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Bowen, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

thus agreeing with Böhme's statement of the experience inducing fascination yet seen as threatening.

2.2 Atmospheric impact and corporeal awareness

As insinuated in the first part of this chapter, alleged pre-existing qualities we encounter in spaces are presumed to be of importance in the aesthetic and embodied experience of light art. These characteristics have been further theorised by Gernot Böhme who defines atmospheres as the sensations, energies, or vibes in any types of spaces we may encounter upon the instant moment of entering through a door.¹³⁹ What we name atmosphere is a widely conceived concept which can be applied on spaces, situations, and even people. In *The Aesthetic of Atmospheres* (2017), Böhme attempts to concretise atmospheres, how we experience them and where they derive from.¹⁴⁰ Böhme traces the origin of the concept of atmospheres back to Walter Benjamin's classical text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935). Here, Benjamin attempted to determine and distinguish the original work of art from its reproduction through the concept of aura, which for Benjamin connects to '[...] its [the artwork's] presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.'¹⁴¹ Although criticising the application of aura on modernist works of art such as ready-mades and Pop art, Böhme acclaims Benjamin's ability to concretise the aura, or atmosphere, which the artwork oozes. Böhme insinuates what makes a work of art '[...] cannot be grasped solely through its concrete qualities'.¹⁴² What is lacking in Benjamin's concept of aura is according to Böhme the recipient, arguing how atmospheres must occur in the relationship between subject and object. Developing on previous argumentation by philosopher Hermann Schmitz, Böhme states '[a]tmospheres are evidently what are experienced in *bodily presence* in relation to persons and things or in spaces.' [*emphasis added*].¹⁴³ This indicates how atmospheres for Böhme should be understood through the creation of relationships between subject and object, viewer and artwork, as the subject becomes the point of reference in the understanding and experience of atmospheres. In comparison, argue both Foucault and Robinson for a spectral aura or the existence of preconceived qualities in spaces, but differ from Böhme in the essence of the origin. Foucault and

¹³⁹ Böhme, 2017, p. 11-12.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ W. Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1935), in H. Arendt, *Illuminations*, tr. H. Zohn, Schocken Books, New York, 1969, p. 219.

¹⁴² Böhme, 2017, p. 14.

¹⁴³ *ibid.* p.17

Robinson argue on the one hand for set qualities or ambiances which a space can (or must) hold without specifying a relationship between subject and space/ object, whereas Böhme on the other hand, argues for atmospheres to be created upon subjective relations towards an object or space. Böhme writes:

Atmosphere is the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived. It is the reality of the perceived as the sphere of its presence and the reality of the perceiver insofar as in sensing the atmosphere s/he is bodily present in a certain way.¹⁴⁴

Hence, according to Böhme, is the aware presence of the subject essential in the sensing (and even creation) of atmospheres as the core of the atmosphere lies in the shared reality between the perceiver and the perceived. Both Foucault and Robinson agree upon the importance of the body as a point of reference in experiencing spaces and their pre-set qualities or atmospheres, whereas Böhme instead argues for the individual being dominant in the atmospherical exchange. Utilising visual perception as a point of reference, Böhme argues for how we see things in arrangements, through relations between each other, spaces, and situations – imagined or tangible. The point of reference is for Böhme the subject which experiences atmospheres through individual bodily sensations.¹⁴⁵ How can we then further understand the hierarchy between subject and object? As stated by Böhme, the elevated idea of the subject must be deconstructed, allowing for the subjective body to be comprehended through its physical qualities. Thus, is a levelling performed between subject and object in terms of physicality, but contractively not in its ability to be dominant regarding atmospheres. Connecting to embodied simulation theory, where vision is seen as a juncture of actual perception, imagination, emotions, memories, and dreams somehow agrees with Böhme's distinction of the experience of atmospheres. The perceiver, just as much as the perceived is central in the experience, justifying both the complexity of the experience as well as the importance of the individuality of the subjective.

2.2.1 The subject-object relationship

In the legitimisation of atmospheres, advocates Böhme for the necessity of disregarding the elevation of the subject, arguing for the release of the concept of the soul. By conceiving bodies solely as physical bodies, we allow for an elevated comprehension of our corporeality in a space. Böhme summarises, '[...] to be bodily self-aware means at the same time the awareness

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Böhme, 2017, p. 15.

of my state of being in an environment – how I feel here.’¹⁴⁶ The same procedure must also be applied to the object. In terms of art, this indicates removing the notion of Benjamin’s aura to return to the object’s formal or object qualities. The obstruction, according to Böhme, is that the formal descriptions which we give an object or item does not come without applied connotations. Colours, shapes, or even smell is not perceived without connotations, nor without judgement of the object for its physical boundaries.¹⁴⁷ Böhme writes:

The form of a thing, however, also exerts an external effect. It radiates as it were into the environment, takes away the homogeneity of the surrounding space and fills it with tensions and suggestions of movement. In the classical ontology the property of a thing was thought to be its occupation of a specific space and its resistance to other things entering this space. The extension and volume of a thing, however are also externally perceptible; they give the space of its presence weight and orientation. The volume, that is, the voluminosity of a thing is the power of its presence in space.¹⁴⁸

In other words, objects affect environments and atmospheres as they remove the homogeneity of the surrounding spaces and releases suggestions of movement. Objects exist then not only through their physical boundaries, but in the power of their presence within a space.¹⁴⁹ Objects must here be understood not solely as items or artefacts, but generally as *non-subjective*, also indicating other subjective minds and bodies, situations, and phenomena like forces of nature. Hence, can we not limit our perception of objects to form or materiality but by its internal properties.¹⁵⁰ Böhme introduces the term ‘ecstasies of things’, which are the qualities which articulates the presence of the object.¹⁵¹ In terms of art, this indicates that we in the subject-object encounter move from regarding the artwork’s historical, contextual, or iconographic reading to instead viewing the experience of the artwork’s affective qualities.¹⁵² Hence, by recognising our own bodily and spatial self-awareness, the subject-object relationship gets levelled through acknowledging the physical entities to spatiality and how we experience it. The relation which is created with an object must thus also be acknowledged beyond its physical and voluminous properties, including the presence of the object. Similarly, resonate the ideas of an equalised subject-object relationship with embodied simulation theory where similar comprehensions can be derived. In the article ‘Visions of the Body: Embodied Simulation and Aesthetic Experience’ (2017) claims Gallese how real presence of subjects and objects should be

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.* p. 18.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* p. 19

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ A. Rauh, ‘The Atmospheric Whereby: Reflections on Subject and Object’, *Open Philosophy*, vol. 2019, no. 2, 2019, p. 152.

¹⁵¹ Böhme, 2017, p. 19.

¹⁵² Rauh, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

considered, as well as the inclusion of imagined or created presences which are valued equally.

Gallese writes:

We live in relation with other people, objects, and landscapes that are present in our real world, but we live as well in relation with people, objects, and landscapes that are part of the imaginary fictional worlds displayed by the arts. Both kinds of relationship are rooted in our brain–body system, and if we aim to grasp the basis of the complexity and the multimodality these relationships entail, we have to get back to the brain and body.¹⁵³

Following the tradition and approach of atmospheres and embodiment, must we then in the aesthetic experience resort to an elementary comprehension of experiencing artworks as objects. This includes comprehending the artwork (object) beyond its physical properties, also acknowledging the presence of the artwork, similarly as argued through the perspective of objecthood. By levelling ourselves as subjects to also be understood through elements of corporeality and presence we enable the embodied analysis.

In the discussion on light art, the element of light suggests a slight shift in how the object (artwork) is visually perceived. Böhme writes, ‘[L]amps should be seen and viewed as luminous objects.’¹⁵⁴ The uniqueness of objects acting sources of light is that they show themselves and are hence different from other objects which are only seen in light but not *seen as light*. The luminous object indicates primarily how a greater level of presence must be considered in the object, as the space which is occupied or affected stretches far beyond the physical limitations of the object.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, does the luminous object indicate a higher impact on atmosphere as light plays a key role in the creation of atmospheres as it impacts and changes perception, perceived, and experienced space. Revisiting Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)* (**Fig. 7**) through the exploration of embodiment and atmospheres will allow for further exploration of the artwork’s *presence* both in space and in its relation to the viewer. Entering the vast dark space in which *Untitled (Light Painting)* is placed, a peculiar feeling moves through the body. An intimate sphere is sensed, partly created by the naked ceiling beams, and partly by the stillness of the space. The muted echo of footsteps on tiles spreads across the open space, and the eerie feeling of the half-shaded room manifests itself. The room bathes in complete silence, except for the low buzz sourced from the artwork in the adjoining room. The eye traces a grand cast of cyan light on a white plaster wall, originating from a slim tripod lamp. The contrasts are vast between the large barn-like space and lone-standing lamp, meeting in a relationship created by light. Sensations of loneliness may rise from the

¹⁵³ V. Gallese, ‘Visions of the Body: Embodied Simulation and Aesthetic Experience’, *Humanities Futures* [online journal], 2017, <<https://humanitiesfutures.org/papers/visions-body-embodied-simulation-aesthetic-experience/>>, accessed 16 April 2022.

¹⁵⁴ Böhme, 2017, p. 195.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

connotations of the colour blue towards feelings of stillness and solitude, as the artificial blue light manages to border between representing alertness and tranquillity. Stepping in front of the lamp, the body gets engulfed in the blue light separating itself further from the darkness as the relationship between body and light now impacts the vision by blinding the eye (**Fig. 8**). On being blinded, Böhme writes how it is an experience of light in which we are overpowered by it.¹⁵⁶ Here, it is interesting to discuss whether the subject-object relationship gets impacted as the presence of the object (artwork) now has completely distorted the viewer's visual perception, thus de-equalising the relationship between the two. However, in an otherwise illuminated room would the distortion not be experienced to this extent, manifesting the importance of site and placement in the aesthetic experience. Regarding *Untitled (Light Painting)* beyond its formal (sculptural) aspects and through a heightened awareness of both space and the subject-object relationship, benefits the analysis from additional corporeal awareness and acknowledgment of presence-impact. The artwork, though modest in size and execution, demonstrates a heightened degree of presence through its cast of light, extending far beyond the object's physical limitations which in the experience of the artwork are difficult to escape.

2.2.2 Space and atmospheres in absence of light

In the debate of experienced space, visual perception and embodiment, what happens with aesthetic experiences in complete void of light? Light art as art form includes art operating with deprivation of light, where an even further manipulation of space in which higher corporeal experiences can be argued for.

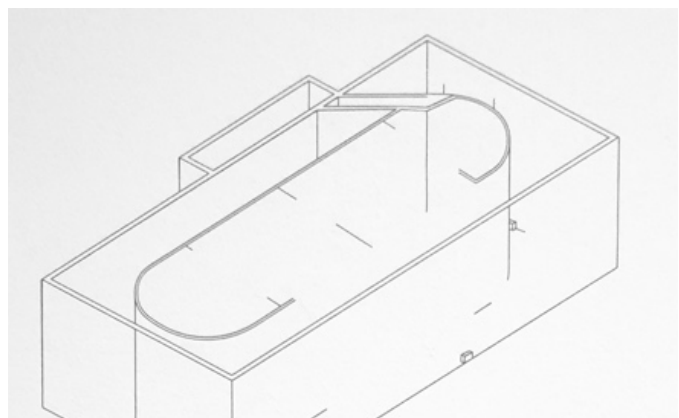
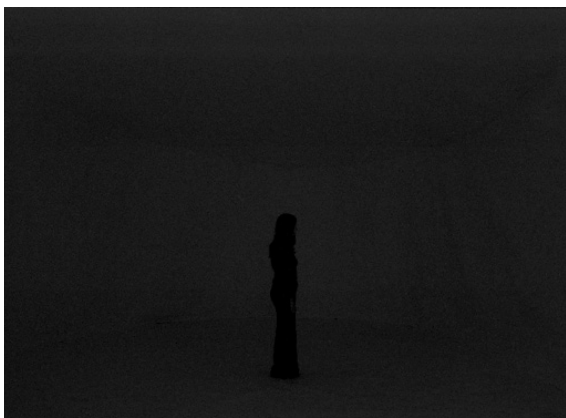


Figure 14: Eric Orr, *Zero Mass*, 1972-73, Seamless paper, plywood panels, and gelled light fixtures, (Installation view), Galleria Salvatore Ala, Milano, 1975, photo: Giorgio Colombo.

Figure 15: Eric Orr, *Zero Mass*, 1975, drawing, 1983, Copenhagen Contemporary, 2021, photo: Amanda Johansson.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.* p. 196.

An analysis performed of Eric Orr's *Zero Mass* (1972-73) exhibited as part of *Light & Space* (2021-22) at CC through embodiment will now follow *Approaching Zero Mass*, visitors are faced with a complete constructed installation space, allowed to be entered shoeless and maximum five at a time. The installation is entered through a tall black curtain hanging from the ceiling constructed of heavy fabric, leading the visitor into complete darkness. Entering and exiting visitors bump into each other in passing where low apologetic words and giggles are exchanged. Without the ability to rely on sight as primary sense, other bodily senses become elevated in the collection of information of the space. Hands running along smooth, rounded walls which leave a plastic-like or laminated sensation to the fingertips work to figure out spatial limitations. Short footsteps trace the loose surfaces covering the floor, and the low rustling sound from paper sheets creates connections how walls and floor seemingly are constructed by the same material. The blinding experience is not adapted by the vision until after approximately twelve minutes, leaving visitors to stumble in complete darkness for quite some time. Some may experience the phenomenon of imagination playing tricks in effort to comprehend the darkness, potentially creating illusions of light or figures. The darkness pushes the creation of a higher level of bodily awareness in which careful body movements and actions are adapted: from lowering of the voice to slower body movements. The experience induces temporarily blindness and spatial confusion where the corporeal experiences define both the experienced space and the aesthetic experience.

How can we then comprehend spaces (and art) in deprivation of light? As previously discussed of Böhme's theorisations are space and spatial understanding for Böhme connected to visual perception and illumination. Here is it interesting to revisit Böhme's concise conclusion, '[s]pace is created not only by walls but also by light, alignment and perspective, not only by stone cornices and cantilevered balconies but also by illumination.'¹⁵⁷ This statement is supported in Böhme's argumentation on how darkness – just as light – is a condition of visibility. This is because darkness in combination with light provides conditions of creating space (e.g., shadows).¹⁵⁸ Looking at the meaning of the word 'created' one can argue for space not becoming fully *created* without the existence of light. Although a sense or appreciation of the spatial dimensions has been manifested upon leaving the experience of *Zero Mass*, a complete understanding or perception of the architectural space has not been accomplished – and will likely not be even upon staying the full recommended twelve-minute duration. The accompanying drawing and image (**Fig. 14 & 15**) placed outside the installation together with the

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ Böhme, 2014, p. 9.

measurements assist in creating a more sufficient understanding of the space. Nonetheless will uncertainties regarding depth and dimensions remain, in which an ‘uncreated’ space also remains.

On spaces and darkness, Böhme regards spaces and their ‘existence’ also in void of light. Lightness and the pure light phenomena are often explored or found in light art as in the case of Turrell, demonstrating how absolute lightness is not simple to define, either in its completion or its spatial limitations. The experience of complete darkness in comparison, however, is experienced in the instant in which vision is obstructed. Darkness holds a duality for Böhme in how it is experienced as excessive lightness is unbearable, but complete darkness, in contrast, may be experienced as depressing or frightening, but may as well induce soothing and calming effects.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, behaves darkness differently than lightness as it does not indefinitely intensify, but instead reaches a certain point in which complete darkness is established. Böhme believes this to possibly be the reason why we define darkness not after the qualities of the dark, but in its absence of light.¹⁶⁰ Although declaring how we indeed experience space in darkness, Böhme manifests the significance of illumination:

To perceive lightness is to perceive space. Light as lightness creates space. [---] We do, of course, experience our existence as being in a space even in the dark. But, in the dark, that space is partly close and confining and partly endless vast, devoid of orientation, and all-consuming.¹⁶¹

In other words, do we experience our existence also in spaces deprived of light. However, is the space in darkness experienced both as confined and endless at the same time since spatial limitations cannot be fully comprehended. Thus, manifest Böhme again how visual perception and thus lightness still acts as the main source for spatial presence and awareness. As described by Böhme, is the contradicting experiences of confinement and vastness which darkness imposes present in Orr’s *Zero Mass*. This extended manipulation and tempering of particularly light and space pushes according to the thesis for further involvement of bodily senses as vision has been obstructed. Although experienced as enclosed and vast simultaneously, manages the viewer to create an evaluation of the spatial features and in certain ways limitations through mapping physical elements through the senses of touch and hearing. The complete immersiveness in darkness pushes for diverse embodied experiences such as fantasies, dreams, or imagination which are allowed to grow within the nothingness. Like Turrell, demonstrates *Zero Mass* an altered sensory environment in which time and reality cease to exist for a moment. Secondly,

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

acts the complete immersivity in darkness here as motivator pushing for elevated presence of the viewer within the space, in which decentralisation is not possible. In means of embodiment simulation theory is *seeing* not solely connected to vision but is the result of a complex construction in which the contribution of the body is included. Here is it also possible to also account for senses, emotions, dreams, and imagination. Although lacking visual perception in darkness, this thesis still argues for the process of constructing presence and comprehension through corporeality, movements, senses, emotions, and imagination, ultimately arguing how the embodied experience may not suffer from darkness and the loss of visual perception, but may be enhanced.

On regarding *Zero Mass* through objecthood, Fried's argumentation on how theatricality and 'stage presence' in minimal (literalist) art works as a quality is interesting to address.¹⁶² According to Fried is 'stage presence' partly a function of the 'obtrusiveness' and 'aggressiveness' in minimalist artworks, but also of the complicity the artworks demand from its viewer. Fried is here clear in his critique on minimalist art and argues for this demand to be based on the level of seriousness the minimalist work asks, although this demand may simply be fulfilled in being aware of the presence of the work and treat it as art.¹⁶³ Fried writes:

Here again the experience of being distanced by the work in question seems crucial: the beholder knows himself to stand in an indeterminate, open-ended and unexacting–relation *as subject* to the impassive object on the wall or floor. In fact, being distanced by such objects is not, I suggest, entirely unlike being distanced, or crowded, by the silent presence of another *person*; the experience of coming upon literalist objects unexpectedly—for example, in somewhat darkened rooms—can be strongly, if momentarily, disquieting in just this way.¹⁶⁴

As installation art implies seeing the entity of the installation rather than individual objects, and objecthood count for including the whole situation of the aesthetic experience argues the thesis for difficulties in performing an objecthood analysis of *Zero Mass*. The objecthood here would constitute of the space in itself as well as the darkness. Similar ideas are posed by Böhme who argues for the possibility of seeing totality of lightness as an object (lightspace). Hence is the opposite of totality of darkness in this thesis argued namely as *darkspace*. As seen in the extraction above, suggest Fried how the presence of minimalist artworks demand a distancing from the subject. Fried compares the experience of the presence of the artwork to the silent presence of another person.¹⁶⁵ Darkspace in this case, demand even higher distancing as the presence of the artwork completely encloses the viewer as subject. The impact of darkness is

¹⁶² Fried, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

also implied in Fried's argumentation, stating how the unexpected encounter with minimalist artworks may be strongly unsettling. In the case of light art completely composed of darkness, argues the thesis for a stronger feeling of unsettlement as it is the *unexpected* Fried refers to – as highly sensed in the experience of *Zero Mass*. Similarly, can the imposing presence be found in Ann Veronica Janssen's *Untitled (Light Painting)*, which with its extensive cast of light hold presence far beyond its material properties.

Light art then, in the capacity of luminous objects (lamps, lighting fittings) and illuminated or light-deprived sensory environments, initiate interesting discussions on perception and illumination regarding our spatial awareness and understandings. Through regarding the empirical materials from an embodied simulation perspective theoretically and methodologically, discussions on perception and *seeing* light art beyond vision has risen. As argued by Gallese, what we *see* is not solely based upon vision, but is the creation of a complex construction within the brain. This construction is created with the inclusion of our corporeal awareness and knowledge, our movements, and bodily senses. Moreover, is perception also defined by our emotions, dreams, imaginations, and memories which may heighten, distort, or overlook objective vision. In the case of obstruction or elimination of vision (which can be derived from all empirical material which either blinds or distorts vision through its usage of light), we can justify our spatial comprehension due to a foundation in corporeal awareness, and the utilisation of other senses, dreams, memories, or imagination beyond actual vision. The elevation of corporeality in aesthetic experiences also allows for easier recognition of atmospheres and object presence beyond material limitations which is *sensed* in the encounter between viewer and artwork. Thus, a combination of regarding architectural, perceived and ultimately experienced spaces stimulates a greater appreciation for the poetics, effects, and immense presences light art entails beyond its minimalistic or abstract physical properties.

This chapter has initially developed on the explorations of space in relation to the internal rules of sculpture, site, and sitelessness through the ideas of Rosalind Krauss. Ideas on space and its importance in the discourse of sculpture has been developed by the exploration of space in its triality of architectural, perceived, and experienced space. Experiences of architectural space has been discussed through theorisations by Michel Foucault and Sarah Robinson around the idea of predefined qualities within a space. These discussions were met by the introductions of theorisations by Gernot Böhme regarding lightness and the creation of spaces. The discussion included notions of light-cleared space and pure light phenomena as manifested through the practice and empirical materials of James Turrell. An embodied simulation analysis of *Aftershock* (2021) initiated discussions of how pure light phenomena are experienced

aesthetically and how it may impact the viewer from distortion of perception to the comprehension of reality. The second part of the chapter developed on the notions of atmospheres and how these can be understood in the subject-object relationship. Here, equalisation between object and subject was explored in the effort of seeing the body for its three-dimensional properties, as well as in seeing the presence of the object beyond its materiality. In seeing Ann Veronica Janssen's *Untitled (Light Painting)* (2004) through embodiment, discussions were initiated on atmospheres as well as the artwork as luminous object, which distorts the perception of the viewer being blinded in the direct vision. The understanding of spaces and atmospheres in means of lightness and darkness have been explored through an embodied simulation analysis of Eric Orr's *Zero Mass* (1972-73). Here, further discussions on the duality of perception and spatial awareness through corporeality were performed, concluding how so-called darkspace contributes to further bodily activation of senses, emotions, and imagination – also found in the presented theorisations including objecthood, embodied simulation, and lightness as discussed by Böhme. The chapter has highlighted the bodily and sensory experiences of light art and the impact of light and lightness on spaces and environments it creates or occupies. This has been performed to further challenge the appropriations of light art as sculpture, spectacle, or as not being art, insinuating how light art seen from an embodied perspective initiates discussion far beyond these appropriations. Moreover, has the chapter argued for the perspective of embodiment allowing for further bodily interactions and understandings beyond vision, arguing how perception is a complex construction created by sight, corporeal three-dimensionality, senses, emotions, dreams, imaginations, and memories. The chapter has argued for how the elevation of bodily recognition and awareness in aesthetic experiences simplifies the sensing of atmospheres and object presence, beyond their physical or material boundaries. Hence, argues the thesis how a combination of regarding the architectural, perceived and ultimately experienced spaces stimulate greater appreciation for the poetics and impacts light art generates beyond its minimalistic objecthood and materiality.

3 Conclusion

The juxtaposition between materiality and non-materiality in light art raises debates relating to dimension, concept, and corporeality, allowing for these to be further explored through diverse theorisations and methodologies. Although discussions around classifications and definitions of media and art forms are not explicitly tied to light art, the abstract qualities of light art demonstrates a clear example in the discourse. This thesis has explored several ways in which light art can be portrayed, delimited, analysed, and discussed to further challenge how light art is defined. The thesis posed the following research question: *How can our understandings and perceptions of light art be enhanced from perspectives of objecthood and embodied simulation?* To answer the research question the study has presented the empirical materials Ann Veronica Janssens *Untitled (Light Painting)* (2004) from the exhibition *Mehr Licht!* at Casa Masaccio (2021-22) and James Turrell *Aftershock* (2021) and Eric Orr *Zero Mass* (1972-73) exhibited in *Light & Space*, Copenhagen Contemporary (2021-22). The first chapter of the thesis has centred around attempting to answer the thesis' first sub-question: *In which ways can the exploration of different perspectives and classifications of light art, such as the portrayal of light art as sculpture, spectacle, or anti-art, allow for an enhanced understanding of the concepts and aesthetic expressions of light art?* This question has been answered through performing analyses through objecthood, due to the minimalistic qualities of the art form allowing for the recognition of conceptuality in the art form. The methodological perspective of objecthood opened for a contextual recognition of the minimalistic, conceptual, and ready-made features of light art. The perspective of objecthood allowed for an analysis founded in the material qualities of light art and artworks, also recognising *the situation*, including the presence of the viewer, spatial qualities, and atmospheres. The analyses have been individually performed as part of challenging diverse acknowledged classifications of light art in which the appropriation of light art as sculpture, spectacle, or as not being art at all has demonstrated the opportunities and possibilities the light art offers in its definitions. The thesis has not argued for their ineffectiveness, but rather utilised these classifications in developing the discussion further, drawing key notions from the appropriations foremost regarding light art's relation with space. The second part of the thesis has attempted to answer the second research sub-question: *In which ways does light as artistic form and aesthetic expression connect to spatiality and atmospheres?* By insinuating in the first chapter how light art must impact its surroundings, the relationships between artwork (light), space, atmospheres, and viewers, the second chapter offers analyses of the empirical materials through embodied simulation. Here, have analyses of space in its triality of

architectural, perceived, and experienced space been performed, including theorisations around space, atmospheres, and illumination. The second chapter has through revising Gernot Böhme's theorisations around light and illumination built the argumentation for how light art benefits from perspectives of corporeality, atmospheres, and presence as advocated through embodied simulation.

Due to the complexity and variety of light art, this thesis has continuously argued for a multi-layered theoretical and methodological approach when approaching light artworks. The thesis suggests how the inclusion of analyses through objecthood as well as embodied simulation offers connections to space and atmospheres, allowing for further exploration of the enigmatic art form of light art, instituting how the seemingly simplicity in light art in fact demonstrates multi-layered complexity in the aesthetic experience. The study has been performed with the objective that we as viewers may favour of interacting with different theoretical perspectives to enable a fuller interpretation of light artworks. Thus, arguing how the methodological perspective of objecthood may allow for a further understanding of the materiality, ready-made, and conceptual qualities of light art. Additionally may the approach of embodied simulation allow for an increased engagement and consideration of the three-dimensional, corporeal, and presence qualities of light art beyond the sense of vision. This has been argued with a theoretical foundation in how perception is a complex construction created by sight, corporeal three-dimensionality, senses, emotions, dreams, imaginations, and memories. Light art then, with its minimalistic and immersive qualities is argued to be elevated in its appreciations through the combination, and division, of regarding the architectural, perceived, and experienced spaces. The thesis suggests how these factors benefit light art as artistic form, as the proposed methodological and theoretical perspectives stimulate greater appreciation for the poetics, presence, and prominence light art generates beyond its physical properties.

The conclusions reached by the thesis may allow for a heightened corporeal and conceptual appreciation for light art as artistic form, allowing light art to be seen beyond its minimalistic physical qualities. The exploration and diversification of Böhme's terminology distinguishes the thesis from previous research as the impact of light and illumination on creation of spaces has been discussed and disputed. Here, has the thesis manifested additional or modified terminology to further challenge and develop how light is seen as artistic form. The study has limited itself to a small number of empirical materials, arguing how the empirical materials act representational, although not demonstrating the variety and extent in which light as artistic form exist. The empirical downstrokes have however, allowed for the thesis to answer the posed research questions. Regarding methodology, proposes the thesis a phenomenological

foundation through objecthood and embodied simulation. Objecthood, on the one hand, does not completely function as phenomenological, but the thesis argues nonetheless for a level of phenomenology as the method is concerned with analysing all parts of the situation, including the presence and perspective of the viewer. The application of embodied simulation, on the other hand, is phenomenologically founded as the corporeality and subjectivity of the viewer is essential to the analysis. However, with the underlying methodological and theoretical base in neurosciences would it be possible in a larger academic study to perform neurological studies on subjects encountering light art.

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