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The Non-Fiction Installation As A Form Of *Being-With*

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Abstract. This paper will look at the various aspects of documentaries to look at how they present a relationship of being-with between the viewer and the subject. Starting with Bruzzi's update of Nichol's taxonomy of the documentary. We will analyze how these forms present the documentary subject to the viewer. We will be focusing on how this enacts a relationship of being-with the other through a feeling of presence. We will see how being-with and our responsibility to the other is fundamental to the documentary.

From here we will look at contemporary non-fiction installations to see how this relationship of presenting the other to the viewer has helped develop the emerging form. We will see how the documentary form has been transformed by installation. How its nonlinear format has created new ways of presenting this relationship responsibility to the other to the viewer. We will look at our relationship to media as found in Flusser and see how it relates to the idea of otherness as found in Lévinas ontology.

Keywords: Installation Art, Documentary Film, Otherness, Testimony Media Archeology.

1 Introduction

1.1 Immersive multimedia?

The conventional understanding of the development of art and technology tend to be presented in a very linear path from one point perspective and the easel painting to photography, film, television, the digital (the internet and virtual reality). Although that is a simplified and useful narrative it leaves out a great deal of technical innovation and popular culture. To not understand the impact of the panorama is to not understand its place in the development of, photography and cinema as well as its place as a forerunner to pop culture. The fact is that elements of immersive media can be traced back to the early Renaissance, the time of the development of one-point perspective and the easel painting [1]. Central to understanding these visual technologies is to analyze and understand what each one tends to valorize, what ways of address and what kind of narratives does each form tend towards. For example, with easel/panel painting we can see how beginning with its use in churches it has been intended to present allegorical meaning as opposed to

being literal. Later as Diderot defined its narrative function as being a *tableaux vivant*, presenting the heightened movement of a known narrative, these narratives are still allegorical. Part of how this format functions is based on the fact that the image is framed it is presented to us as a window unto another world [2]. This allows a specific way of reading the image. One where our separation from the scene gives us a distance so that we can read the image and make judgment of the message. Presenting the viewer with a Cartesian perspective on the image, one where the presence of the image is separated from judgement of the viewer. As such this form of art is one that is centered on that distance of the image from the viewer as found in the presence of the frame. When Diderot talks about the *tableaux vivant*, he is placing the core of the visual experience into the narrative. The image is centered on the story first and the aesthetics or possible presence are secondary considerations. As much as we read this as the primary way that most people experienced images it doesn't negate the fact that a desire for the experiential existed even before his time. Or that with a desire for the experiential, immersion and a feeling of presence tended to its own forms of address and narrative. As we become wrapped up in the experiential, we start to move away from a Cartesian experience of disembodied judgment on a remote scene into one that exists through our presence. In doing this we will see that the relationship of the image moves from being purely metaphorical into being one that centers on experiential or denotive elements to transmit information. We will see that it presents what Emmanuel Lévinas calls a face-to-face encounter with the other [3] and how that is central to nature of the work.

Let us look at how the immersive has developed from the early Renaissance to our present moment of virtual and mixed reality with an emphasis on how these forms have an important part in the creation of the non-fiction and documentary forms as we know them today. We will see how these forms focus on and present our relationship to the other as a fundamental part of their function and ask questions as to how this understanding allows us to move forward.

1.2 From the Museo Kircherianum to VR and XR.

In order for us to look at the development of the immersive and see how it has developed we need to find a starting point. We have to ask what qualifies as an immersive work. Do we say that the cave painting found in Chauvet or Maros-Pangkep karst as they are in a closed environment where they are central to the experience? We need to see what are the common elements that allow us to say a work is an immersive installation. As stated above immersive works are ones that bring a feeling of presence to the viewer. This means that there is a sensory stimulation beyond just the visual. It also means that this stimulation is designed to engage the viewer. If we look at what we know of the cave painting or even Greek or Roman mystery cult murals, while the images played an important part in the rituals, they remain supplemental to the events within the rituals. The actions centered on performance (citation). If we take the idea that the acts relating

to the work are centered on a relationship between it and the viewer, we eliminate out most traditional performances, rituals and theater. In these traditional forms the audience is either a separated viewer as in an opera or they are active participants with prescribed roles as in religious rituals.

From this we can start to see that interactive works move away from the frame and create a direct relationship with the viewer. As this idea of interaction of becomes developed so does the need to create technologies that can create and present these actions. As Siegfried Zielinski explains in *Deep Time of the Media*, we can see these beginning in the Renaissance. This begins with the work of such people as Giovan Battista della Porta and Athanasius Kircher [1]. They were part of the movement from Alchemy to Science. Important to this movement was the not just the development of new ways to research and create new technological items, because that was still found within alchemy, but what was more important was the belief in making this knowledge available to others. The presenting of knowledge and the experiments that allow this knowledge to be transmitted is an important basic element of science. For people like della Porta, Kircher or Ramond Llull this transmission included the visual and in Kircher's case the development of an experiential museum (Museo Kircherianum in the Collegium Romanum) for the Jesuits in Rome (Ibid). Here images and sound were used to present to the viewer an experience which would present the great and esoteric knowledge of the world.

As the discipline of science was developing from alchemy and metaphysics, people like Kircher were developing new ways of understanding and depicting the relationships between the physical world and the metaphysical world. Early devices such as the magic lantern and metamorphosis apparatus¹ are made to put us in relation to the image as Other. Where the frame separates us from the image giving us a distance in order for us to understand the image a representation, the metamorphosis apparatus and subsequent devices allows us as viewers to a direct access to the image as a presence. The early uses of the magic lantern by della Porta, Kircher and others still understood the image as one of metaphor of ways of making the metaphysical presentable. It is with later inventions that we see how presence becomes more front and centre as images away from the frame become more immersive.

It is with the invention of the panorama that we start to see the development of a technology specifically designed to immerse the viewer in an environment. As a system it was developed to make a view not accessible to the public where it is installed available. The first designated panorama was 'View of Edinburgh' seen in London in 1788. In a purpose built building the viewers enter onto a platform in the middle of a circular room where a 360° painted image displayed on the walls. The images shown were views of other places in the form of a landscape [4]. These images could be remote locations, such as Edinburgh to a Londoner, historical, as in battle scenes of ancient or recent history, or religious such as the scene of the Crucifixion of Jesus. Because the panorama and the later diorama are both frameless and landscape based, they tend towards the evidentiary.

¹ The metamorphosis apparatus was a device described by Kircher in *Pseudo-Euclid* (1671) as a device where a viewer sees their body reflected while their head is replaced by a projection of the sun, moon, or astrological signs. It is further describes as allowing another observer to see these images through a peep hole [1]

We take these images as having veracity. They are placing us into an event and its location for us to experience it. Where the panorama was solely images on the wall, giving the viewer a remote view of an event or place, with the diorama scrim or objects were placed between the painting and the viewer to give a more realistic and immersive experience.

Where Kircher gave us a metaphorical experience now it starts to become a documentary experience. People go to the Panorama/Diorama in order to experience an event as unfolding in time. Since the image is too big to see at once the viewer move around the platform on their own or following a guide. With the diorama adding an extra level of drama to the experience. Still in the end what makes this form of purpose-built installation work is a feeling of being able to experience what is being seen. The story being told may have a moral, it may be one that the viewers know, but it is the experience of it as an event in the world, our being-there in the event that is unique to the form.

Here we see that the experiential brings us to the documentary. It is the placing of us in a relation to what we see and hear that defines the form. This is the beginning of presenting the concept of the documentary as our seeing the event unfolding before us as opposed to having a written narrative which may utilize documents as evidence. This will develop further in the documentary film. With the invention of photography, we were able to experience images that were literal slices of time and space. As Roland Barthes said images are moments of the past captured to be seen in the future [5]. It brought us images of denotation. The veracity of what is before the lens is not questioned. With cinema this relationship was further enhanced by the unfolding of time. We now could experience events as they unfolded as real events. Where the diorama was a recreation based on a theatrical narrative, with cinema just the unfolding of images of reality came before a narrative. As we experienced the world through movement in time, the experiential became an important part of what cinema is. This is why the Lumière brothers first film, their workers leaving their factory had the power that it did. Even in fiction film it is this sense of experiencing the real that captures the viewer. Vilém Flusser says that with the invention of the camera we moved into a post-historical world [6]. We went from history as a linear progression of events recounted and organized by an author in print to a documentary, a time-based presentation of direct evidence in the form of seeing the events in question and the testimony of witnesses. Where the historian finds evidence and documents and then makes sense of it for us in a linear narrative, in the documentary we are confronted with the documentary evidence more directly. This is not to say that the documentarian doesn't try to formulate a linear narrative to make sense of what we see, but we believe it because we see the events and hear the voices of witnesses; they carry a different weight. The move from history to documentary is precisely an attempt to become more experiential. To make sense of the world through direct encounter with the issue in question. As cinema developed the desire to be more immersive continued. Although the technology was built on being framed images, we can even from the silent film days a desire to make the experience more immersive. An early notable example is the ending scene *Napoleon* [7] where a triple screen projection was used. In the 1950s Cinerama and CinemaScope and later IMAX in the 70s were developed for a similar immersive experience. The idea of formats is that the projected image should be larger than the field of view of the viewer so that there is no frame edge. As the technology of

Cinerama was difficult to shoot and project Much like the panorama before it, IMAX tends to produce documentary experiential works based on putting us in places we would not be able to normally experience. Again, the form starts with the experience and only after that is established can narrative occur. We find this continuing through to the new technologies of 360° video and mixed reality. There is a draw between the experiential, non-fiction, and documentaries. This is because we are using this technology to place us in the world.

1.3 The technical image and how it places us in the world.

Behind the development of our technologies there are the concepts which encase and frame the technology. They are the ideologies that motivate and reinforce how the technology presents the world to us. They can be very obvious such as how algorithms and universal Turing machines present us with a world that is driven by mathematics, or they can be more metaphorical as in how our understanding of time and self was changed by the photograph. As we look at how the immersive installation has developed, we need to investigate what are the theoretical underpinnings that motivate its development.

Earlier we have mentioned how the immersive work such as the panorama is designed to place us into the presence of an event that we cannot experience in normal life. It is not just the idea of remote viewing like we would find in a framed painting, but the idea that we would feel a sense of presence. That we should feel that we are before the events we are seeing. The fact that the panorama was developed around the same time as the idea of the sublime is linked. As we develop new ideas of how we see and understand the world we need to find ways of portraying that. Edmund Burke published *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757, Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, where he talks about sublime judgement, came out in 1790 and the patent for the panorama was in 1791. The idea of the move away from the beautiful to something that is all encompassing it is a device that creates the vast visual vista that Burke is referring to.

If the beautiful as we understand it can be found in the framed painting this because the frame allows for a distance between the viewer and the image, while the panorama takes away the frame and places the viewer seemingly in the middle of the scene depicted. It is meant to give the viewer a feeling of being present facing the event before them. It tells us that we are not alone in the world. This is where the feelings of awe and fear arise, in our feeling the presence of an otherness before us. In this both Burke and Kant are in agreement even if they do not use the same terms. What is found in this sublime feeling is the presence of something beyond the self, not just other but other in relation to us. It is this feeling of the sublime as our being overwhelmed by the world as something greater than us that also grounds us in the world. If the framed painting places us in Cartesian space of judgement where we are detached from the image and we can pass judgement on it because of this separation, then the sublime places into the same space as what we are seeing. There is no ability to be separate from what we see. The movement from the beautiful to the sublime is going from a detached view to *being-with* what we see. It places us in the world. It is about the fact that we are facing the world as Otherness. And how that reinforces our understanding that our being is tied to a relationship with the

Other. It is this confrontation between Being as self with the world as Other which is what gives us this sense of fear and awe. Fear of losing control of the world and awe of how the world makes a demand on us in our responsibility to it. We are faced with that which is prior to us and that from which we have arisen. For Burke and Kant this is an unnerving occurrence. It goes beyond reason; it places us in a world of immanence. As such it makes sense that the main form of image used is the nonfiction image.

As we developed forms of imaging that allow us direct access to the world, photography, and film/video, they became not just images from the world, but images that place us in relation to the world. They present us with a reality that we cannot ignore. Where the hand drawn image is created through interpretation, these images grounded us in time and place. They are created in a specific moment in the world. They carry the stamp of the denotational with them. Our belief in technical images is based on this fact. As they place us in a situation that emphasises us as *being-in-the-world* it brings forward this feeling we find in the sublime. It is not that every image will give us a sublime feeling, but that by the nature of their relation to the world they have that potential. They bring us closer to our *being-in-the-world* as they draw us closer to the world.

As we develop immersive works, we have two distinctly different directions that we can go, one that places in the world or another that places us in an imagined world. In his book, the *Uncanny*, Freud talks about a what is a feeling of uncanniness (unheimlich) and what its effects on us are [8]. He defines the uncanny as “often and easily produced by effacing the distinction between imagination and reality, such as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality” (Ibid). It is when our daily experiences are confronted with something that takes us away from our normal sense of self and confronts us with another as beyond meaning. Something that we must first confront as real. His definition has strong parallels to the sublime. Both are situations where we are confronted with an otherness that disrupts our sense of being. This is done because as we confront the Other, we are faced with our responsibility to it as other (an actual entity in the world). For both Kant and Freud this confrontation with Otherness in its reality causes fear and awe. It takes us away from being as the solitary entity long defined in Western philosophy. It negates the Cartesian world view not only because it places otherness into existence, but it also places being into a physical world of dependency and relationship. In doing so, by revealing us as *being-in-the-world* it also looks to the world as fact, to it as real and not fiction. This the feeling of the uncanny. This is the feeling of coming face-to-face with the other as real. Again, we see how by turning us to face the world as it is and not as symbolic language we are drawn back to non-fiction.

By way of contrast in the same essay, Freud tell us that we can also experience works that are complete world unto themselves. These do not possess the uncanny as they are not tied to the world. The example he gives is the fairy-tale. For him they never give us this feeling because we know that we are not connected to that world. It is wholly imagined and as such remains in the world of the symbolic. We may enjoy experiencing it, but it remains separate from us. We can see this in the gaming and VR worlds. Where we may enter as characters, we may have agency within the world, but that world doesn’t touch our world. As cinema has moved away from the real towards the narrative world such as the Marvel Universe, they have tried to create spectacular work in the hopes of having it be overwhelming, but in doing so they have abandoned the feeling of presence.

We are kept at arm's length from what we see, it does not present us with a feeling of *being-with* instead it hopes to overpower us to take us to their world where we are merely spectators. The spectacle can be absorbing, and it can communicate meaning to us, but in the end, it depends on the work and the viewer having a distance from each other. This fits with Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk. It is complete in itself, and we are allowed entrance into it, but this is absorption, but not immersion. We are taken into the story, we identify the with characters, yet we are always aware that there is a separation between us and it. This Wagnerian mould is one where we are given the privilege of presented with a complete world as conceived of by the artist. It speaks to us but never enters into dialog with us. To do this the work and us have to be encounter each other in the world. In *I and Thou* Martin Buber says that the I-Thou relationship can only happen through presence, and this is where dialog happens. Without a capacity for dialog, we are left with an I-It relationship, one where we make sense of the thing before us [9]. In the end while it may seem overwhelming, with the Gesamtkunstwerk we are in its presence and not present with it. Its spectacle distances us from it leaving us in an I-It relationship.

1.4 Engaging with the audience

Buber talks about the I-Thou relationship as my being engaged with you through dialog as an active event establishing presence. He sees that to be engage with the other we have to be there with it. This is what we are calling presence to be before the other as an event. The nowness of the event is central even if we are encountering images that were created in a past. The encounter is now. To do this we have to enter this relationship as equals or else a dialog cannot happen. The event may be removed from the flow of causal time as Badiou reminds us, but it still places us in-the-world [10]. To feel that we are present in an event is to feel that we are removed from the normal world. This again takes us to Kant's sublime and Freud's uncanny. In all cases we are talking about a moment that removes us from the normal flow of the world, from our being ourselves within the world and places us in a moment where we are confronted with otherness. Being confronted with otherness places us in moral relationship with the work that draws on our responsibility to the other as themselves. through and with the work we are confronted with otherness in how it completes us by grounding us in the world. If we look at the work of Shimon Attie, we see that he places the face of the other into our environment so that it calls back to us. In *The Writing on the Wall* (1991-2) we are presented with images of the pre-war Jewish community in Berlin projected back onto the building of the neighbourhood where the images were originally taken. He is placing us in direct relation to these images in a way that emphasises the reality of time and place, both past and present. We are confronted with the people who would be erased from Germany in a way that opens up their humanity to us. We see them in their reality, not as symbols of history first, there is a call to our responsibility to them found in facing them, in not forgetting. While in *The Writing on the Wall* presents historical images as a form of presence, *Night Watch, New York* (2018) & *Night Watch, San Francisco* (2021) present the face of the other in a contemporary situation. Here video images of refugees recently arriving to the US are shown on screens on barges floating the harbours of the two cities. They walk up to the camera and silently look at us. They are on boats in the two major

ports of entry in the US. The placement of the video on boats in these harbours adds a context that emphasises our relationship with the faces we are looking at them. We are confronted with otherness in their face. We are called on to respond in some fashion. We cannot ignore their presence. We bear witness to them as their very presence is testimony to what they have gone through. This is how the work makes us see ourselves in relation to them as other it makes us see them and us as *being-in-the-world*. Our relationship with these faces as real people is what we feel first, we see them as people, not symbols of a political issue. We encounter their faces as silent testimony. They are not making a statement; they are just there, and we recognise this when we look at their faces. As in *The Writing on the Wall* a particular physical space is used to present the meaning of the work through its place in the world.

All of this comes together by opening up a space for the voice of the other as testimony. The act of bearing witness or testimony is one that ties us to the witness. For testimony to be given it must be to someone else, it is a call that demands a receiver. This can only be done in some form of face-to-face relationship between the persons involved. Before the creation of recording devices this testimony could only be in person. But since invention of photography, we have been able to use device to preserve and present testimony in a meaningful way; one that perseveres the experience of bearing of witness and the responsibility found in being the receiver.

2 The non-fiction installation and the documentary

2.1 The forms of documentary and testimony

What distinguishes the documentary from other forms of non-fiction is that it allows us direct access to the testimonial. Where written history is mediated through a linear text giving access to the events in question through the author, the documentary lets us experience first-hand the data behind the narrative. This is normally done either through direct observation or by allowing participants bear witness to us on camera.

In *New Documentary* Stella Bruzzi updates Bill Nichols' taxonomy of the documentary. They break it down to five forms, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative [11]. For us distinguishing the different modes is their relationship to testimony. How much do they allow the bearing of witness within the work. In the documentary form witnessing manifests itself in two ways, we observe events as they unfold, or we are presented with direct testimony from witnesses. All these forms allow for this in varying amounts. For example, the narrative heavy expository form is based a traditional linear narrative told to us by a narrator as in the series, *The Civil War* by Ken Burns [12]. Here images and diaries are used as supplemental evidence to the singular narrative. Such a form allows for very little in terms of testimony. By contrast observational films like the Maysles brothers & Charlotte Zerwin's *Salesman*, which follows door to door bible salesmen is very heavy in direct observation[13]. In this form while we bear witness to events, we are not privy to the thoughts and motivations of the subjects just their actions. To varying degrees the participatory, performative, and reflexive forms allow for us to have direct testimony from subjects. A good example of the participatory form is

found in the work of Erroll Morris, most notably in *The Fog of War* [14], where we are confronted with the life and career of Robert S. McNamara through a series of interviews conducted by the director (off camera). The face and voice of McNamara is the core of the film with historical footage used to fill in gaps or illustrate what he is saying. He gets to bear witness to his life and the effects that his choices have had on history. While his bearing witness is the centre of the work his version of reality is not left uncontested by the interviewer instead, we are left to see McNamara's face as he is challenged as a way of judging the reliability of his narrative voice. Another strategy towards the bearing witness of events is found in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* [15]. In this nine-and-a-half-hour documentary we see Lanzmann as he goes from place finding different people who are able to bear witness to the systematic annihilation of European Jewry during the Nazi occupation of Europe. Lanzmann talks to perpetrators, survivors, villagers who witnessed the events of this mass murder. Here we see people in their environments talking about events of the past. We see their faces as they speak, we get to judge who they are and what they say as their testimony is presented in a fairly objective way. No archival footage is used in the film, the voices of the witnesses are presented in their own environments in the present to emphasise the veracity of their testimonies. That different voices have different perspectives, that they may contrast or contradict is central to the work. As a method of presenting testimony as narrative we find that this has been picked up in the creation of installation-based work.

2.2 Testimony in the nonfiction installation.

While the understanding of the act of bearing witness and its relationship to the viewer comes from cinema, it is transformed with installations. The documentary as part of the cinematic tradition still defers to the director as author as the creator of meaning, with the installation the narrative form becomes more open ended. When the director has the final say as to what is real and how we are supposed to draw meaning from what we see then the testimony of the witness remains supplemental on a certain level. Because the installation exists not only as image, but also in a physical space the viewer's relationship to the how we encounter this testimony changes. The documentary as a form comes out of the traditions of written history, the linear narrative and the authoritative voice of the historian. What distinguishes it from this prior form is that it allows us direct access to the voice of the witness, shows us events as they unfold, and allows for non-linear time in its telling. As the documentary practice moves from the cinematic form to multi-experiential installation certain elements recede and others become more prominent.

As we have discussed earlier the work becomes more conversational in way that Martin Buber lays out this idea. Where the cinematic experience is one of stopping life to be still and have the film unfold before us in a theatre, the installation can be in situ as we say with Shimon Attie or the space can be designed specifically for the work encouraging or demanding movement from the audience. We will see more about this with the two examples we will discuss later. This idea of engaging with the space is tied to our second point of being asked to bear witness to the testimony of the subject. Bearing witness demands being in relationship to the other, the witness bearer. We are receiving their testimony. Although mediated it is still a face-to-face relationship. Because as the work

becomes more experiential, it removes the control and voice of the director placing the function of creating meaning to the viewer. Yet since the work also is organized around the experiential, we face the witness in their humanity encountering them as real before we are in a position of creating meaning. Being-with comes first and meaning only comes later. In *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, Vilém Flusser says that we are drawn to the technical image because of how it opens up new way for us to be able to be drawn together. That the promise of the face-to-face is what are looking for in the imaging system. This promise is inherent in the technology, it is how we use and develop technology that will valorize this or turn it to other ends such as surveillance capitalism [16]. So, for him the facing of the other is at the core of the technical images that we use. As we develop documentary installations we are adhering to this principle. In both this work and his earlier *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* Flusser also states that as functionaries creating work with and through the technical image that we interact with the technical image to create unique forms, to find all the possibilities of expanding the full potential of our interactions with the technical image and the viewer [6]. If we look at the installations *From the Other Side* (2002) by Chantal Ackermann and *My Head is My Only House, Unless it Rains* (2022) by Ken Feinstein we see how this form brings the testimonial voice forward, employs the experiential, and places the viewer in a relationship with the witness.

2.3 *From the Other Side*

From the Other Side was originally created to be shown at Documenta 11 in 2002. It is based on the footage shot to make the film, *De l'autre côté (From the Other Side)* (2002). The installation is about illegal immigration into along a section of the US Mexico border where the towns of Agua Prieta, Mexico and Douglas, Arizona meet. It is made up of three parts, A single channel video based with a voice over narrative, based on US Border Patrol images from helicopters this leads us to the main body of the work which is 18 monitors arranged in 6 rows or monitors arranged so that one can see the entire work as whole or walk through the work to see the clips individually or as part of a troika. Finally, there is a large screen projection of a screen along the US Mexico border where she projects the film version of this work. The images in the installation are of interviews with people from both sides of the border as well as shots travelling along the border, in the desert nearby and in the two towns. These images give us a feeling of how it feels to experience the trek of the border crossing and of the border police and ranchers who patrol the border trying to find people slipping into the country.

Central to the work is the presentation of the voice of the witnesses, of both sides of the situation. As we hear their testimony, we see the complexity at play here. In the interviews we hear the voice a young man on the Mexico side as he tells the story of an attempted border crossing that his brother took part in that resulted in several deaths. In another clip a border guard expresses sympathy for the people crossing the border, but also states that he needs this job as he feels a lack of opportunities or choice similar to that found with the migrants [17]. This central room is one designed for the viewer to move around through to go from person to person to encounter them on an intimate level. As all the clips are playing at once the narrative arch found in *De l'autre côté* avoided.

We are left to encounter each person as an individual, we must look into their face as they testify to their history, situation and perspective. The accompanying images in the towns and along the border region present us with an experience that locates us into this space. The screens are arranged in a way that gives us view similar to what we see driving down the highway with a distant horizon line implied by the road. We become present there, it places us into this world in a more direct fashion than we would find in a documentary. We are experiencing the same thing as witnesses; we are there and cannot ignore what is happening. Even the video footage from the Border Patrol helicopters places us both in the position of the Border Patrol and of those being observed. We see both sides equally in their otherness. We understand this situation as being a web of action and responsibility that all the players are part of and cannot control. In the final space we see a screen in the desert, the sun sets and *De l'autre côté* is projected onto it. Here we see Akerman bringing the conversation regarding immigration back to the site where it plays out. She is adding a form of presence to the border so that we can reflect on what is happening as it defines how we relate to the other and the responsibility that this carries. In case we are not aware of her point the name of the work is *From the Other Side* in the title she is telling us that this is about our relationship to otherness. She is telling us that we have to see the situation from the eyes of the other. In a situation like illegal border crossings the political debate happens through taking the individuals and turning them into signifiers. Making them signs instead of people. Akerman's work is designed to bring forward the face of the other in their humanity.

Akerman's case is interesting in that she had made a documentary first *De l'autre côté*. She created the installation precisely because it addresses the topic in a very different way. It is meant give us a feeling of journey s experienced by the border crosser. We go from room to room, from antechamber to the border crossing zone and finally away from it to a space that allows for reflection. In her written work on this piece, she has referred to Agua Prieta as the antechamber while getting to a major city such as Los Angeles or Chicago is the goal where the event is over and we can reflect on it. In this way the entire area is a liminal space, and the work is meant to reflect this transition and the final projection place back at the border and also talks of the ability to be on the other side of this liminal space. The installation form here uses both forms of bearing witness as the central element of the work. We are presented with the face and voices of those bearing witness to what happens in this liminal zone, and we are given an experiential movement through space which is parallel to the journey of the migrant crossing the border into the Douglas area. The desire to present this as an installation is because it allows for a different way of giving us this sense of the plight of the other. This is reflected in her essay for the Documenta catalogue [17].

2.4 *My Head is My Only House, Unless It Rains*

This was another project based on issues of migration, in this case migrants to Lisbon in 2022. *My Head is My Only House, Unless It Rains* was created as part of an artist-in-residence at Carpentarias de São Lázaro, an art center in Lisbon. The project was a look into issues of assimilation among migrants of varying generations. The work was in three parts, interviews with migrants, footage of the Martim Muniz/Mouraria area and video

montages of religious tiles on the exterior of buildings transforming from Catholic imagery to Hindu and Buddhist. The last part was meant to reflect the changing nature of the neighborhood as it the population became more South Asian, West African, and East Asian. The work was designed with three projected screens and a single mixed soundtrack. The center screen contained clips of interviews with a group of migrants from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. This group included recent migrants as well as people whose life was more directly affected by Portuguese colonialism. The group of interviewees split into people whose background was touched by Portuguese colonialism and those who had no cultural connection the country.

In terms of the use of testimony is used in the work the closest parallels are Lanzmann's *Shoah* and Akerman's *From the Other Side*. Like these works the testimony of the interviewee is central to the work. Where *Shoah* and *From the Other Side* were shot to be used in traditional documentaries, this project was conceived of as an installation. The design of the installation was already in mind when the interviews were conducted. The nature of the installation in terms of intent and design was explained to the subjects before the interview. The interviews were conducted around a loose set of questions so that the answers from the interviewees fit together. They were asked about assimilation and any feeling they had relating to becoming part of a new nation and culture. Topics such as language and how they were treated on the streets or at a job/university were covered. In the installation the clips taken from the interviews were programmed to play randomly. This was so that the artist/director's voice would be diminished if not eliminated. The intent was to bring center the work on the testimony of the interviewees. If there was any direct voice of the artist /director it was found in the montages, which along with the street footage was designed to be supplemental to the testimony presented on the central screen.

The design of the work was that of a three-screen projection with the testimony of the subjects was in the center large screen and the montages, street scenes and random blank image made up the side images. They were all played randomly so as to create a feeling of conversation between the elements to each other as well as including the audience in this conversation. By randomly programming what was being played allowed the images and voices to encounter each other in their own fashion and avoiding the building of a specific argument of view from the artist/director. This work was designed specifically to enhance a sense of *being-with* the work. As we find with the design of *From the Other Side*, this work is meant to create an intimacy with the subject, bringing us face-to-face with the other. The act of removing us from the daily world and entering into dedicated space is to immerse us in the event as a space. To have us face the other as a nonthe-matizable face and voice. While the images of the neighborhood help us in seeing ourselves and the subjects as *being-in-the-world*. The work was conceived of as a way to bring present the migrants voices to the viewer, but also have us bear witness to that voice as a way of understanding our responsibility to the other through this act.

3 Conclusion

As we have seen the use of immersive technology has to been used to present Otherness to us since these technologies have been developed. As technology has developed so has the ways that we can present the other to us. From the panorama to the immersive installation, we have seen how we have developed ways of creating presence. This has enabled us to create works that go beyond the rhetorical and metaphoric nature of symbolic language and put us in direct presence with the other. As technology allowed us to see and hear others, we have developed work that allows us to both hear testimony and to directly experience events as they unfold. This puts us in a different kind of relationship with the work than we had with traditional art. Where that work uses metaphorical language to express its ideas here especially in the form of the documentary, we find that we are face-to-face with the other in the form of the witness and our witnessing. As we add in an ability to encounter these images in a more experiential way, we find that the call of the other becomes more central to the work. We have seen and discussed a few examples in order to understand how this facing of the other and its call is brought forward. As we look as we can see how they indicate a way forward for future non-fiction work and the intentions that the experiential carries within it.

Here we have looked at the non-fiction work only and briefly made a distinction between it and the purely fictitious immersive work, but we should also acknowledge that some fictional works refer back to how we access otherness through the immersive. Such works that bridge between the two forms is also an indication of how allowing the image to be a form of presence can present us with the face of the other in new forms of narrative.

Here we have looked at the non-fiction work only and briefly made a distinction between it and the purely fictitious immersive work, but we should also acknowledge that some fictional works refer back to how we access otherness through the immersive. Such works that bridge between the two forms is also an indication of how allowing the image to be a form of presence can present us with the face of the other in new forms of narrative. As Flusser has said, we develop technologies so that we can make sense of the world. That the communicative drive is central to this desire [16]. Within this drive is a need to reach out to the other and we have been creating form to enable our ability to do this. As artist move forward into new ways of creating this drive is an underlying aspect of what they do.

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