

# Chapter 5

## Expanded Architectural Awareness Through Locative Media



Sarah Breen Lovett

**Abstract** Moving Image projections onto architectural surfaces can be considered a powerful form of locative media. The interplay of real space and virtual image can highlight overlooked relationships, we have with architecture and make one hyper-aware of the location of one's physical body and the space one is within. The types of installations discussed here are very different from locative media that use gps, virtual mapping or other locative devices, and contemporary mapping projection practices onto buildings, which may aim to transform the look of a façade with illusion and spectacle. Instead, this low-fi approach has its dual lineage in both: experimental architectural practices that aim to examine or subvert relationships to architecture, such as works by Dan Graham, Bernard Tschumi, Diller and Scofidio; and installation practices that employ awareness of self and the projection environment as by UK Expanded Cinema artists William Raban, Nicky Hamlyn and Tony Hill. Referring to these historical examples, six contemporary installations by the author will illustrate how various locational relationships to architecture can be explored with moving image projection. They will examine how such a practice enables a shift in the experience of the body between the architecture and moving image. That is, the practice holds the attention at a point of wavering between moving image and architecture, between haptic experience and habituated expectations. Within these works a heightened experience of location emerges, this can be thought of as a dis-juncture between the architecture and the re-presentation of a new relationship with the architecture.

**Keywords** Expanded architecture · Expanded cinema · Installation · Moving image

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S. B. Lovett (✉)

The University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning, Sydney, Australia  
e-mail: [sarah.breenlovett@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sarah.breenlovett@sydney.edu.au)

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## 5.1 Introduction

Creating and experiencing a heightened experience of self in relation to architecture, through moving image installation, and wanting to understand this further has been the driving motivation for a series of six installations presented in this chapter. These works can be considered a low-fi locative media, in that they examine the interplay between architecture and self through moving image projection. This interplay results in, what we shall refer to as an *expanded architectural awareness*, that is an increased awareness of architecture, and the self in relation to and defined by architecture. The focus on expanded architectural awareness is not motivated by a desire for synthesis between self and place. Rather, it examines the various disjunctions between self and place as defining factors of moving image installation reception. In these works, the seemingly static, stable architecture is layered with moving images that necessitate the physical body re-stabilising or re-orienting itself. Hence, awareness of an architecture is not only created through a haptic experience but also an awareness of self in normative or habituated relation to the architecture.

In this chapter, *haptic*, is used to refer to an experience of the physicality of the body as affected by different parameters of architecture and moving image installation, such as physical dimensions, angled geometries or material quality. It is understood that various combinations of these parameters affect the experience of the body and can, in part, be embodied as a physical experience. Haptic experience is seen as a combination of a ‘sense of touch, the perception of position and motion (proprioception) and other tactile and kinaesthetic sensations’. (oed.com) This understanding of haptic also extends from its Greek root word, *haptikos*, which means ‘able to come into contact with’ (etymonline.com). This means the body is able to come into greater contact with architecture and moving image installation through embodied haptic experiences.

While *habitual* is used to describe various relationships with architecture that are learned through experience and repetition but become overlooked because they are repeated so often. *Habit* is from the mid-fourteenth century Latin word *habitare*: ‘to live, dwell’, and is a frequentative of *habere* ‘to have, to hold, possess’ (etymonline.com). *Habit* is also related to the term *habitus*, which is used to describe the embodied consequences of habit, how the habit is incorporated into the schema of the body. The etymology of the word *habituate* comes from the 1520s Latin word *habitatus* and is a past participle of *habitare*: ‘to bring into a condition or habit of the body’ (etymonline.com). Building upon this etymology, this research uses of the terms habit and habituated relationship with architecture also refer to the notion of having. That is the architecture, is *had* by the inhabitant; it becomes part of the inhabitant through its habituated use.

## 5.2 Architecture

The use of creative practice to reflect upon haptic and habituated ways of relating to architecture, can be considered an extension to well-known experimental architectural works by Dan Graham, Bernard Tschumi, and Diller and Scofidio. These practitioners have been concerned with critiquing normative ways of thinking about our relationships with architecture through speculative and realised architectural projects involving live video feed or drawings around ideas of the moving image.

Dan Graham's *Picture Window Piece* (1974) and Diller and Scofidio's *Slow House* (1991), both examine and critique the impact of habituated relationships to architecture. Through the proposal of live video feed image from interior to exterior, these works assume certain specified relationships to architecture for the *meanings* of their works to be understood, meanings normally unspoken or taken for granted. These specifically relate to situating the self in the dynamics of the interior/exterior dialect. While, Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–1981), utilises drawings generated out of the language of moving image, which deconstructs architectural form, focusing instead on the actions that take place within the built environment (Tschumi 1994).

While theoretically relevant, both of these techniques can be considered to have their limitations in regard to the ambitions of the contemporary works to be discussed. By carrying out their inquiries through live video feed or post-structuralist de-constructed diagrams, these practitioners are aiming to diminish the subjective role of the author. That is, these works attempt to create an objective re-presentation of relationships to architecture by using systems that take the subjective determining factor of the author out of the equation. In contrast, this chapter argues that the relationship of the author to architecture during the act of making is an unavoidable determining factor for works that explore this area of concern. Hence a survey of structural filmmakers and expanded cinema artists who explore various processes of self in relation to architecture during the making the work becomes important.

## 5.3 Expanded Cinema

Rather than using live video feed, or diagrams to examine ideas around expanded architectural awareness, the contemporary installations to be discussed in this chapter are concerned with ways to re-present and shift architectural awareness with pre-recorded moving image installation. For this reason, the concept of drawing attention to the *here and now* of a projection environment, through moving image and as articulated by UK expanded cinema artists becomes useful (Le Grice 2001). These ideologies are drawn on as a way to encourage the audience to be critically aware of themselves and architectural assemblage that they are situated within when viewing moving image installation. This notion is most evidenced in the works of Tony Hill, William Raban and Nicky Hamlyn.

Tony Hill's distinctive approach to filming and re-projection divorces the movement of the camera from its normative embodied use, as evident in single screen works such as *Downside Up* (1984) (Nardelli 2009). Hill is also noted for filming people and places from unusual angles and re-projecting these onto different architectural elements such as floors, ceilings and walls. This tactic is seen in works such as *Floor Film* (1972), *2nd Floor Film* (1972), *The Doors* (1972) and *Ceiling Film* (1973). Hill's single screen and expanded cinema works show that mechanical techniques of filming and re-projection enact a reinforcement of the viewer's relationship to architecture. Specifically, Hill's work can actually return the spectator to an awareness of their self and the architecture of the installation space (Hill 1973, 2013).

Similarly, Nicky Hamlyn's series of works called *Silver Street* (1974/5), *Window Lapse* (1975) and *Windows* (1975), along with his more contemporary writings provide a variety of ways to understand the consequences of moving image projection on an awareness of self in relation to architecture. As summarised by Hamlyn, his work 'can be seen as an interaction between a given architectural feature and its cinematic re-presentation, in which film and feature are both illuminated and obscured' (Hamlyn 2004).

Further, William Raban's structural films such as *Angles of Incidence* (1973), alongside expanded cinema works *Pink Trousers* (1976), *After Duchamp* (2003) and *Duchamp's Dissent* (2011) investigate how the reflexive relationship between site and architecture during the act of filming directly impacts upon the viewer's spatial experience of the work and the architecture. Raban's practice also highlights the role of multiplicity in exploring corporeal and cognitive relationships to architecture with moving image projection.

Building upon these historical architectural and expanded cinema precedents, the contemporary installations discussed in the next section form the idea of expanded architectural awareness through four intertwined and multilayered approaches to a low-fi locative media. The first approach draws attention to the *here and now* of various habituated relationships we have with architecture; this is done by reinserting filmed footage from the exact site of the installation. The second approach draws awareness to various haptic relationships to architecture with footage filmed from elsewhere on the site. The third approach allows other subjective or metaphorical elements to be layered in the work. While the fourth approach actively engages with other people's narratives to examine how this can inform the work. In essence, the practice began by trying to adhere to an understanding of expanded architectural awareness that was strongly informed by habituated relationships to architecture and it evolved to acknowledge the value of other modes of engaging with architecture, contributing to what an expanded architectural awareness maybe.

These contemporary installations will now be introduced and discussed in relation two specific locational experiences: the first is being in transitional zones, that is: the areas of architecture that are at the threshold between two spaces, and the second is being split between interior and exterior, that is: being physically located in one area, but thinking of another space that is exterior to the space that one is in. Both of these approaches may seem similar, but the variety of examples within each will

illustrate the precise nature of moving image installation on architecture as a form of locative media.

## 5.4 Transitional Zones

The first works to be discussed focus on spaces of transition between one area in a building and another; such as in stairs, corridors and doorways, it is an interstitial zone between destinations. These types of architectural assemblages are rich with potential for locating one's body and mind between two spaces. One can be physically in a transitional zone while simultaneously thinking of where one has come from, and where one is going to, and the activities that occur between both.

The technique that is used in the exploration of transitional zones is the filming of the architectural assemblage and then reinserting the edited filmed footage back into the place where it is shot. This is similar to William Raban's notion of *reflexivity* (Raban 2011) where adjusts his processes of filming in the location of the projection but he also projects from the exact space that he films, such as *Pink Trousers* (1976), *After Duchamp* (2003) and *Duchamp's Dissent* (2012). This creates dialogue between the experiences of the artist to the architecture during the act of filming, with the experience of the spectator to the architecture during the act of watching.

In contrast to Raban's minimally edited approach, some of the works in this section use digital editing between the filming and re-projection to order and grid the footage prior to re-projection. This part of the approach can be considered an extension of the works of Nicky Hamlyn, who films in a series of grids and or sequences in order to divorce the movement of the camera from the body's parameters (Hamlyn 2006). Mixing a reflexive filming technique with a sequential or gridded edit of the footage may seem like a contradiction in approaches. In these works, however, an attention to place and the body's relationship to it during the act of filming is drawn forth, edited and re-projected to become part of the new architectural experience. These concerns and techniques can be seen most clearly in the following works *Still Stair* (2010), *Corridor* (2011) and *Openings* (2013).

## 5.5 Still Stair (2010)

*A white-washed timber stairs sit between two walls. There is silence. A projected image of black and white stripes begins to scroll across the floor toward the stairs. The image slides up the first vertical stair riser and across the horizontal tread. Up again and along again, over and over, until the image reaches the top of the stairs. The projection now fills the entire stairwell, the sidewalls and ceiling above. Gliding up and over all that is seen. The endless scrolling loop is an abstracted pattern of the timber slats of the stair, reduced and simplified. As such, it is not an image of another place and time, it is a layering of existing parts of the architecture back*

*over itself, the cast chiaroscuro: light and shadow slowly reveals and conceals the details of the stair's timber grain, cavernous gaps between slats, protruding nails, carvings on the handrail and peeling paint on the wall. In climbing the stairs, one becomes aware of a sense of instability. The body's relationship to the architecture no longer seems secure, but rather, it emerges as slippery and uncertain. The edges and boundaries of step, wall, ceiling and handrail alternate between visibility and invisibility. Standing between the projected image and the stairs, one's shadow is caught between the moving lines of light and the physicality of the stair run. While the body is located on the tread one is standing on and around the handrail one is holding, the mind is free to roam; it wanders, backtracking downstairs to the space where the journey began and is cast forward, upstairs where the projection is leading. The mind expands outward to perceive the location of the stairs in the room and one's body on the stairs, while it also zooms into focus upon multiple details of the stairs highlighted by moving image projection.*

*Still Stair* (2010) was selected from an open call for proposals in an exhibition called *Emergency Display* curated by artist/curator Alex Wisser, at the artist-run gallery *The Vanishing Point* in Newtown, Sydney. Wisser's open curatorial approach meant that the work could be created anywhere within the gallery space, so the stairway was chosen. This zone intersected the front and rear gallery spaces and also provided access to the residence above the gallery (Fig. 5.1).

The habituated relationship that the work highlights is that a stair is a static and non-moving element designed to be traversed by a moving human body. The body's physical movement within a stair is that of ascend or descend, we are moving upstairs or downstairs, we are moving and fluid within a stair. A stair is a place for transition between two zones, two places and two-time frames; then and now. The architectural awareness of a stair is held in a state of transition and expectation, between where



**Fig. 5.1** Sarah Breen Lovett, installation view of *Still Stair*. 2010

we are going and why we are going there. One can have a multiple spatial awareness while on a stair: upstairs, downstairs, on stairs, in stairs and above stairs. In *Still Stair*, the implied physical relationship to the stair is reconstructed, instead of a static space used for a body in transition between places it becomes a space animated by its own image, reflected within the confines of its own parameters, observed by a static body.

The silent image projected was abstracted footage of the stair itself, a simple camera pan across the striated surface of the stair soffit. This footage was animated as high contrast black and white imagery so each striation could be read clearly and in contrast to each other; it was then animated on a loop, appearing as a never-ending scroll of black and white lines. Double projected and reflected in three angled mirrors around the stair, the image projected was on a path *that mimicked the* trajectory of a body navigating the stair. The mirroring of image results in simultaneous striations moving up the stair, across the soffit, the walls, the handrails, around the architraves onto the landings. The multiple mirror reflections create a *stagger* effect, the lines no longer appear to scroll in a synchronised manner across the various surfaces of the stair but rather stagger and alternate so the multiple projected images are essentially *woven* together, reflected and refracted from the mirrors. In *Still Stair*, the pattern of the stair soffit being reused in the projected imagery and the spectator's body being physically placed within the crossfire of the projections draws attention of the spectator to the details and construction of the stair, as well as their physical location within it.

The next work will discuss another transitional zone: corridors, they also hold the same locational potentiality that stairways do. This is because they are points that we move between to get to another space. However in addition to this locative device, in a corridor, there are also potential metaphorical undertones that may be layered into the experience of the occupant.

## 5.6 Corridor (2011)

*At the end of a long corridor, one can see a projected light which at once terminates the space and becomes a visual extension of the corridor. The silent projected image alternates slowly, almost imperceptibly between one which is temporarily decipherable as the architectural space one is standing in, with perceptible floor, walls and ceiling; this shifts to an out-of-focus image that becomes a blurred light at the end of the corridor - a light that flickers and grows as it is focused into its new position at the next stage of filming. Through the pulsating, morphing image at the end of the corridor, a re-presentation of the time-space experience of the past and future is created.*

*Corridor* (2011) was created as part of the *Expanded Architecture* Exhibition 2011 at the CarriageWorks building in Sydney. The brief to all artists in the exhibition was to respond to the existing architecture. In collaboration with photo media artist Yvette Hamilton, we chose to make a moving image installation in one of the long, dark tunnel-like hallways. As such, *Corridor* was created to draw awareness to being in

spaces of transition, between one place and another. To do this, it was decided to create a work that literally focuses upon the light at the end of a corridor and move toward it in the filming sequence (Fig. 5.2).

This filming sequence took place in one-metre intervals from one end of the corridor to the other. At each filming location, the focus on the camera was shifted from a clear image to a blurred image. When these parts of filming were edited together the physical transition from one position to the next was lost in a blur. The footage was then projected back into the place it was shot. In *Corridor* (2011), **the**



**Fig. 5.2** Sarah Breen Lovett and Yvette Hamilton, installation view of *Corridor* (2011). Photograph by Yvette Hamilton



**light at the end of the corridor moving in and out of focus can appear to have subjective, metaphysical undertones. This could be read as the light at the end of a tunnel that one hears about in a near-death experience or as a metaphor for the end of long arduous journey.** This layering of metaphoric meaning of was not foreseen or planned in the installation, but it could be considered to be something which enhanced it and opened up the notion of what an expanded architectural awareness maybe - an awareness which is responsive to various culturally constructed metaphors.

Building on the metaphorical aspects of location, in relation to transition zones, the next work engages with the architectural assemblage of doors. In this work, it has been carried out specifically in places of worship to explore how this rich context can impact on the sense of location in relation to the architectural assemblage.

## 5.7 Openings (2013)

*Standing in a small sandstone church with raked ceiling, one can see a double arched doorway leading out of the space. The dark, cool, heavy weight of the walls contrast sharply with the glaring light visible through the cracks in the doorway. Directly above the door, a projected image of the same doorway slowly begins to appear. The perimeter of the projected doorway is amplified and multiplied around itself over and over again. A silhouetted body appears in the projected image of the doorway, and begins to open and close the door, in a number of different ways. This projected door amplification and action, at once draws attention and consciousness to the act of moving through the door way, and the multiple ways this can be done.*

*Openings (2013), was made in response to an invitation to contribute to the Cementa 13 Festival in Kandos in rural New South Wales, curated by Ann Finnegan. The work was made over two venues: a local church (Fig. 5.3) and convent, both of which had obvious historical, cultural and metaphysical overtones. Initially disregarding this aspect of the site, the work was created to explore locational relationships to doors and openings. Both of the works were created by filming existing openings in each building and duplicating multiple copies of themselves inside of themselves. This act was two-fold, to firstly amplify the transition zone between inside and outside, and to re-construct a new image out of the re-presentation of the existing architectural assemblage.*

The first part of *Openings* was filmed in a church and included the act of filming myself walking through a door and closing the pair of doors in seven different configurations because this was the number of different ways it was possible to close this set of doors. This footage was then multiplied inside of itself seven times so the editing process mirrored the interaction with the architecture while filming. The second work was created by filming footage in the convent's various hallways and doorways and then edited, duplicating each image inside of one another so the work becomes a reconstruction of the architecture born out of its multiplication.



**Fig. 5.3** Sarah Breen Lovett, installation view of *Openings*. 2013. Photograph by Yvette Hamilton

While *Openings* was made as a solo work, it had an accompanying soundscape by artist Gregory Reeves, called *Quartet 4* (2011). This electronic ambient track was made up of a series of continuous harmonic tones. This soundscape allowed the shifting imagery of openings to be drawn forth from the projection space, while the higher pitch tones highlighted the points of tension in change from one opening to the next.

It must be noted here, the inclusion of a body in the footage was something that had been previously avoided because it was believed that if a person was present in the footage, the first-hand experience of the spectator in relation to the image would be compromised. That is, because of a person being in the footage the work could appear to be *representing* an architectural space rather than creating new architectural experiences. This was partly in reaction to Nicky Hamlyn referring to people reading some of his works as autobiographical when he is included in the footage, such as *Windows* (1975) (Hamlyn 2012, 2013). It could be argued that although there is footage of a body in *Openings* it is autobiographical because this is not the focus of the works. Also because of the close proximity to the original filmed architecture, the presence of a person in the footage also became reflective of the viewer's relationship to the architecture. This aspect of the work also builds upon the works of Tony Hill, who uses footage of people in the same architectural situation projected back into the architectural construct.

Because *Openings* was located in a church and convent the religious connotations of *openings to other worlds* was prevalent in many of the visitor's comments. While this subjective/narrative aspect of the work was not the goal of the practice in some

ways it can be considered unavoidable in this context. Interestingly, if it had been another location it would be devoid of such connotations or they at least would be diluted. This work continued the exploration of the way we relate to architecture is not just in a locative, objective, ergonomic or haptic manner, but also subjective and metaphoric.

## 5.8 Interior/Exterior

Shifting from filming and projecting in transitional zones within architecture, such as stairways, corridors and doorways, the following works look more specifically at the interior/exterior dialect. In these works, this is done by filming elements of a building and projecting onto another part of the building. In all of these works, there is a common aim to shift attention from where one is situated (either interior or exterior) to the opposite place where they are not. This is to create an expansion of the corporeal experience beyond the physical location that one is within, to a mental experience of mapping the space.

This work developed out of the idea that a habituated and haptic relationship to architecture can be heightened through the visual perception of interior and exterior. While one is exterior to one space, one's mind can be in another part of a building, one's relationship with a building is simultaneously here and there. Conceptualising in this manner leads to the ambition of amplifying how different parts of a building can be thought of as physical and experiential openings between the interior and exterior, between the physical place of where we are now and the visual space of what we can see.

This work relates extends notions of interior/exterior in Dan Graham's in *Picture Window Piece* (1974) and Diller and Scofidio's *Slow House* (1991). This is because they propose an examination of location, and explore how this plays a role in the experience of architecture. The way this work pulls apart the different architectural elements could be considered akin to Bernard Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–1981) because it fragments and deconstructs various elements of the architectural experience through moving image. But instead of Tschumi's diagramming techniques, this work uses installation and instead of attempting to create a new architecture reassembled out of these components it considers the reconstruction complete in its fragmented and pulled apart state.

In all these contemporary works the spectator views the moving image installation, the space and their relationship to both from an exaggerated distance, further amplifying the interior/exterior dialectic and their position to it. By occupying the constructed space in the installation, the minute architectural threshold space between interior and exterior is amplified.

The first interior/exterior dialogue to be discussed is actually within an interior space, however, because some of the spaces are physically inaccessible, and only accessible by the vision it gives the feeling that one is located on the outside to where one may like to be.

## 5.9 Between Here and There (2011)

*Standing on the second floor of a three storey warehouse, a disengaged lift shaft with small grated window lies ahead. From a distance a faint flickering light can be seen. Moving closer, the grated window is just out of eye height, so one must stand on tippy toes to see though. Once peering inside, one can see a projection scrolling upwards. The imagery is in high contrast black and white, and appears to be silhouettes of little creatures from another world. Because of the extent of the projection into the depth and height of the lift shaft, it is impossible to see where the projection is coming from and where it is going to. The location of oneself is on the outside of a space, forbidden entry by the body, but only accessible by the mind.*

*Between Here and There* (2011) was selected by Fraser/Queen Street Studios, Sydney as part of an artist's residency. During a 3-month period, the space was occupied and documentation began on parts of the architecture that were habitually overlooked. This led to forensically filming and photographing every detail of the interior. One day while filming, a simple shift in the focus of the lens revealed the dust particles that were caught between the floorboards. This was considered to be evidence of how we habitually do not notice small details in our architectural spaces. The dust was reminiscent of various occupations of the architecture, that are unnoticed and built up over years of use in the building.

This finding evolved into a detailed documentation process of every crack in the floorboard seen from the upper floors of the building. Filming at night with the lights on the storey below enabled as much detail as possible to be seen between the floorboards. To make this work there was experimentation with many types of filming, such as making a special rig for the camera to sit on the end of a broom so that the camera can be used to film during the act of sweeping. It was hoped that the act of sweeping the floor could expose the un-noticed detail that lay beneath; however, this action did not have a high enough level of detail. The best way to capture the landscape of dust and particles trapped between the floorboards was to individually photograph the cracks in two-centimetre-wide sections per photograph and piece them together digitally.

The act of documenting the gaps between the floorboards enticed such a level of anticipation and satisfaction by gaining visual access to a space that is normally overlooked that the feeling of a secret being simultaneously revealed and held was evoked. Spaces that can be entered with the eye but not with the body translate into a voyeuristic satisfaction. This experience of making the work was so potent that it became a primary driver for choosing the location of the installation. It was decided to use the residency studios extremely large abandoned lift shaft that was boarded up with timber doors on each floor. Access to this lift was strictly out of bounds but visible through a metal viewing mesh panel on each floor. In this installation, the silent footage was projected into the lift shaft, so through these apertures, it could be seen scrolling vertically from the bottom of the lift shaft to the top of the lift shaft, over the three stories of the building (Fig. 5.4). This was to position the viewer in relation to the overall height of the building, but also in an interior/exterior dialect.



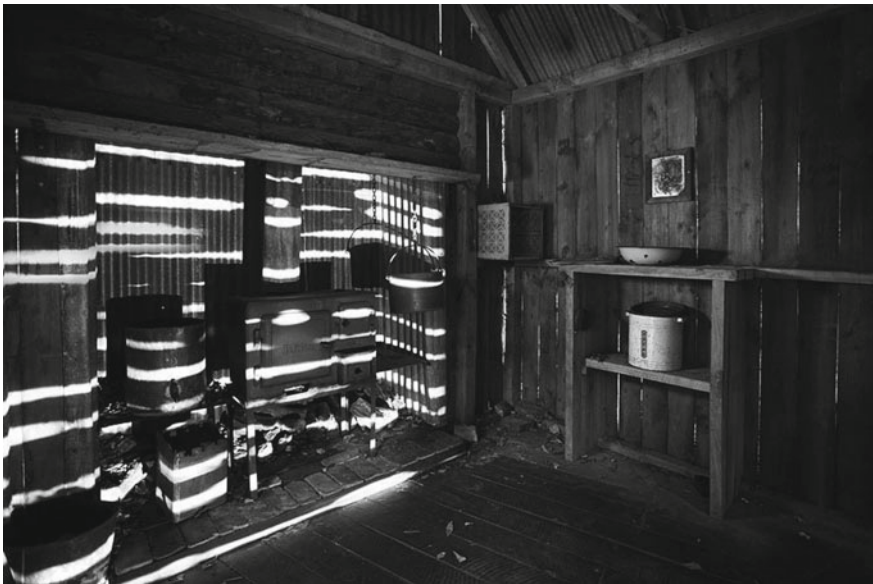
**Fig. 5.4** Sarah Breen Lovett, installation view of *Between Here and There*. 2011

Focusing again on the gap between timber boards as the threshold between interior and exterior, the following work heightens the locational experience of being interior yet potentially affected by the exterior world.

## 5.10 Ex/Enclosure (2013)

*Walking through an ancient rainforest, amidst the sound of bird call and density of foliage, one can see a small timber cabin on the path ahead. Approaching the cabin, a loud crackling sound from inside invites the door to be pushed open. Once inside this dark protected space, the eyes slowly adjust to see a single bed, table, chair and hearth. One can see small light cracks in the openings between the timber slats on walls and roof. Slowly a single projected line emerges from the edge of the hearth and begins to traverse horizontally across the undulating corrugated walls and cooking pots. One by one more lines join in, until the sleeping hearth is filled with a sea of lines, and appears active once more. The lines appear to be magnified versions of the real cracks in the walls and ceiling, which turns one's mind to the outside and the lack of true separation from interior and exterior.*

*Ex/Enclosure (2013)* was selected by an advisory board to be part of the *Sculpture at Scenic World* Exhibition, sited within a 1880s coal miner's hut in a world heritage listed Jurassic rainforest in The Blue Mountains (Fig. 5.5). This work explores the threshold between inside and outside, where the minute details of the miner's hut were amplified becoming an immersive projected space. The work was described by Gail Priest, art critic for *Realtime* as 'the only truly site-specific piece [...] It is conceptually a complete use of the space' (2003). This work was specifically created to explore what it might mean to occupy a miner's hut and the impact that the interior/exterior dialogue might have on someone inhabiting the space. In the



**Fig. 5.5** Sarah Breen Lovett, installation view of *Ex/Enclosure*. 2013. Photograph by Keith Maxwell

wilderness of the rainforest, the sanctity of the miners' hut is a world on its own and the shifting rays of sunlight through the cracks in the walls can be seen as a form of visual stimulation as well as weather and time-telling device.

In order to reflect upon the significance of these shards of light, each crack in the wall was filmed individually using the parameters of the body to arc the camera from the ceiling to the floor along the vertical crack lines. These images were then edited to create a series of horizontal lines that run counter direction to each other and were re-projected back onto the fireplace hearth. Reflecting upon the way that the digital moving image has replaced the fireplace as the heart of the contemporary home, the gridded lines of light slowly traversed the fireplace—revealing and concealing overlooked fragments of the hearth. The accompanying sound was a recording of the effort to pick up an AM radio station, which was inevitably out of reach. The crackle of the sound and the shards of light served as a representation of the physical relationship to a space so remote.

Unlike *Between Here and There* this work not only represents a physical relationship to the cracks in the walls or floorboards, but it also refers to a specific historical reading of the architecture. It inevitably refers to how the miner's hut may have been occupied and what significance the light through the cracks in the wall may have had.

The final work to be discussed has the most complex locational interior/exterior device being used, while one is interior to one space the mind is encouraged to wander around multiple spaces in a whole, historically significant building.

## 5.11 The Other Room (2014)

*Entering the oldest building in the Blue Mountains, one can smell the dust and feel the weight of time in the walls. Descending into the largest room in the building you encounter a circle of chairs. The room begins to fill up with people, who all sit in the circle facing one another, a séance like configuration. A sound recording begins, an older woman's voice begins to recount ghost stories of the building. Looking up, a projected image of the attic window you recognise from the building's exterior begins to appear and turn upon itself. Slowly the changing images appear: one by one, turning and correlating to the different parts of the building that are being recounted in the ghost stories. As one sits there, a spatial experience of the building begins to occur. As you are grounded to one spot transfixed by the ceiling, the sound and image transports and directs your mind to firstly the turning images, which have a destabilising effect, and secondly to the multiple different parts of the building, that are all exterior to where you are now.*

*The Other Room* (2014) was selected by committee from an open call at Woodford Academy, the oldest surviving building and National Trust site in The Blue Mountains. The work was carried out by separately interviewing two women who had been volunteers at *The Woodford Academy* for over 10 years. In the interviews, both of these women recounted various ghost stories that either they had experienced or that

they had heard about. It was interesting that each of the ghost stories had very specific relationships to different architectural assemblages in the building; these focused on the windows, upstairs floor surface, stairwell and bathroom.

One of the stories recounted by both women was a common feeling of dizziness in the upstairs rooms where people would feel overwhelmed by the heat and claustrophobic conditions. Following this it was decided to film each of these spaces as described in the interviews, using the action of unsettled movement in the filming technique. While filming in a standing position, I rolled my body in a circular motion from far left to far right while also slowly turning the camera lens. Small snippets of sound from both interviews were edited to join parts that were talking of the same architectural assemblages. Footage from that assemblage was then edited into accompany the narrative track. This resulted in a non-linear narrative format that began with the areas at the top of the house, made its way down the stair and out into the garden area. The sequence of the work was made so that the viewer would be sitting in the seat in one room and they would be taken on an aural and visual journey through the house, so their mind would wander through the house.

For the presentation, the footage was projected on a short-throw projector onto the ceiling in the largest room in *The Academy* (Fig. 5.6). Seating was placed around the edge in a circle so the audience could sit down to watch the film above them, this was also used to draw attention to themselves sitting in that location. The movement of the camera was designed to instil a sense of dizziness in the viewer so they felt what the ghost stories were relaying; the audience recounted a strong visceral, haptic effect from this. This work was structured around the narrative provided in the interviews in the ambition of drawing forth the historical and cultural layers of the site and how these could provide new experiences of the various architectural assemblages within *The Woodford Academy*.

This installation references the anthropomorphic filming techniques used by Nicky Hamlyn, where filming generated through the parameters of the physical body is seen as a useful structural film process, such as *Window* (1975). This installation could also be considered in relation to Tony Hill's work, such as *Floor Film* (1972) which asks the audience to occupy a space where they experience dislocated filmed footage, separate to the projection environment that in turn heightens the haptic relationship to the architectural assemblage, specifically projected onto a ceiling such as *Ceiling Film* (1973). The visceral haptic nature of this work, is also a relation to Hill's explorations of footage with antigravity and disorientation, to create a hypercorporeal awareness of the architecture, such as *Downside Up* (1984). While Hill's films rely on the method of shock and strong visceral sensation to the images to disrupt the stability of the architectural assemblage, these works use more subdued, slow-changing images, which speak of exterior spaces.





**Fig. 5.6** Sarah Breen Lovett, installation view of *The Other Room*. 2014. Photograph by Yvette Hamilton

## 5.12 Conclusion

This series of works has shown various locational experiences of architecture, and self in relation to it can be explored with moving image installation ranging from the habitual and haptic, to the historical, cultural and narrative. These different interrogations of architectural awareness can be realised through various techniques such as using site-specific filmed footage projected back into a site, to using footage that is imported from elsewhere. The work explores the location of the body in spaces of

transition, by returning the use of filmed footage from the site of projection. While the second series of works projected footage of imagery slightly dislocated from their original place. This was to specifically create a fissure between where one physically and mentally are located. In both of these works, apart from using structural and technical filming techniques, it was also carried out by allowing historical and cultural influences to add extra layers to the notion of what an expanded architectural awareness may be informed by.

The practice focused upon the habituated and overlooked relationships we have with architecture, through artists such as Dan Graham, Bernard Tschumi, Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio. Therefore, works such as *Still Stair* and *Ex/Enclosure* were created in order to question the notion of preconceived or preformed relationships between self and architecture. Notions of William Raban's reflexive techniques and Tony Hill's haptic relationships became focused upon in works such as *Between Here and There*, *Corridor* and *The Other Room*. The case study research on artist Nicky Hamlyn highlighted the difficulty of separating the architectural and processual from the subjective, so this aspect was explored through works such as *Ex/Enclosure* and *The Other Room*. This led, in the later works, to an approach whereby the boundaries between subjective and objective were deliberately blurred and allowed to become indeterminate. Thus the work became more experiential and open to subjective readings.

This body of works enables a shift in the experience of the body between the architecture and moving image. That is, the practice holds the attention at a point of wavering between moving image and architecture. Within some of these works an emergence of perceptual dislocation occurs; this can be thought of as a disjuncture between the architecture and the representation of a new relationship with the architecture. The novelty of this practice comes from the way it examines architectural concerns through a practice that highlights and integrates artists' and spectators' experiences of self in relation to architecture in order to produce a new architectural experience— expanded architectural awareness.

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**Sarah Breen Lovett** is Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Monash Art Design & Architecture (MADA). Her recent publications include contributions to “Expanded Architecture: Temporal Formal” Bauhaus Edition 47 by AADR, and “Interior, Landscape and Architecture in the Era of Liquid Modernity” by Bloomsbury and “Making Visible: Architecture Filmmaking” by Intellect.