



# PERSONAL PROJECTIONS



*A collaborative multimedia installation  
created by Nikki Horowitz*



## ***INTRODUCTION:***

My thesis, PERSONAL PROJECTIONS is a collaborative biographical multimedia video series presented as an installation. Performers interact with LCD projections in recorded video vignettes. Through performance, my team has analyzed memories that define an aspect of their identity. These memories are triggered by sensory stimulation- a sight, smell, taste, touch, or sound. I worked with eight performers from the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, to create short, 30-120 second original pieces based on their personal memories. Images and videos were projected onto the subject's body and on dressed sets, exploring the relationship between actor or dancer and the composed image.

PERSONAL PROJECTIONS was presented as an installation in the Duderstadt Video Studio on April 14th and 15<sup>th</sup>. Each memory vignette was shown in a curated sequence, grouped by theme on projection screens around the theatre's perimeter. Speakers were placed below the screen, creating a surround sound soundscape of memory stimulation. The audience was immersed in an atmosphere of dim, colorful lighting and projections flashing back to biographical memories that are bitter-sweet, traumatic, lovely, comical, or confusing. Viewers were invited to walk through the installation. Depending on their proximity to the screen, viewers experienced singular memories or viewed multiple at once. The memories disappeared and reappeared on the screens, similar to how people recall and are reminded of experiences in their lives.

This paper will explore the cultural, historical, and theoretical background and precedents for my work, the methods used to arrive at my final product, and the materials and processes used to create this work.



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene "Homes"

## ***CONTEXTUAL DISCUSSION:***

### **EXPLORING OUR SENSES**

A single smell, taste, sound, touch, or sight has the power to conjure up entire scenes from the past. I've used this phenomenon as a starting point for my actor's intimate memories, exploring their identities and personalities. "A Natural History of the Senses" by naturalist Diane Ackerman teaches the science of how different senses work and how cultural practices stimulate the senses.<sup>1</sup> This was helpful in making me question why music moves us, why foods remind us of people, and how our pheromones can control our emotions. I raised questions relating to these senses with my performers. To create a grasping scene, we dissected each sense that was stimulated during the memory, and created a short narrative by emphasizing the senses primarily through visual and auditory cues.

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1. Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (New York: Vintage Books)

**CONFESSIONAL ART: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POINT OF VIEW**

The confessional art movement explores autobiographical memories or intimate revelations about a person's private life, recollected in the form of artwork. Louise Bourgeois, the mother of “Confessional Art” used her own experiences to provoke emotional reactions from her audience.<sup>2</sup> She



*Femme Maison*: Louise Bourgeois, 1945-47

focused on telling a story from her interesting past, referencing memories of her childhood experiences and traumas, rather than intellectual theory. Her work *Femme Maison* (*Woman House*), made from 1945-47 is a series of paintings in which each women’s head is covered by a house, and her naked body protrudes beneath it.<sup>3</sup> Symbolically she thinks she is safe in her home, but her vulnerability is being exposed to the world. Similar to Bourgeois, PERSONAL PROJECTIONS portrays different memories in abstract, figurative and symbolic ways to provoke my audience. Rather than defining the memories through concrete, objective descriptions, each audience member is able to interpret the scene based on their own values and ideas. For example, I explore one of my performer’s, Larissa’s fertility and femininity with the

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2. Deb A, “Confessional Art,” *Agave Magazine*, May 2015, 4, <http://www.agavemag.com/blog/womens-confessional-art>

3. Will Gompertz, “My life in art: The day Bourgeois moved me to tears,” *The Guardian*, October 2008, 8, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/oct/07/louise.bourgeois>.

image of spiky cacti blooming and wilting on her womb. The audience questions the juxtaposition and may conclude that Larissa does not want to or is unable to have children.

Candy Chang's 2012 piece, *Confessions* is a series of secrets published and displayed anonymously in a hotel in Las Vegas.<sup>4</sup> Hotel guests were asked to anonymously write down their confessions in a safe environment, a private booth. Chang said, "We're all



*Confessions: Candy Chang, 2012*

trying to make sense of our lives and there's great comfort in knowing you're not alone.

Everyone you walk past is going through challenges in their life."<sup>5</sup> My intentions are the same in this regard: I wanted my audience to connect to this piece, as the themes we chose could connect to mostly anyone's lives. The scenes cover common identity issues, to secretive and rare topics. Rather than the anonymity Chang created, I created an intimacy between myself and the performer, allowing them to comfortably share their lives. We often got into deep conversations about their upbringing, issues and unrevealed aspects of their identity. We drew from these important moments, which are seen in their publicly displayed autobiographical pieces in *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS*. I am inspired by collaboration and have found that basing my work off of these real interviews of biographical stories is captivating for both the artist to create and the viewer to observe.

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4. Candy Chang, "Confessions," *Candy Chang*, 2012, <http://candychang.com/work/confessions>.

5. "Confessions Art Show: Artist Candy Chang Brings Strangers' Secrets To Las Vegas." *Huffington Post*, May 3, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/03/confessions-art-show-artist-candy-chang-brings-secrets-to-las-vegas-photos\\_n\\_3202081.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/03/confessions-art-show-artist-candy-chang-brings-secrets-to-las-vegas-photos_n_3202081.html).

Projection artist, Krzysztof Wodiczko's 1987 piece, *The Homeless Projection*, also uses biographical interviews to tell the stories of the homeless. Wodiczko projected homeless people's accounts of his or her time as a soldier or sailor during the civil war, on a civil war memorial.<sup>6</sup> His audience is exposed to topics they are normally unaware of. These points of view range from everyday accounts to obscene, unique stories. I hoped to similarly shock and captivate my audience, allowing them to explore the mundane common identities and eccentricities of my performers. Wodiczko's use



*The Homeless Projection: Krzysztof Wodiczko 1987*

of large scale projections is similar to mine; I presented my final piece in the Duderstadt Video Studio which has an immense sized screen. Many of the videos were 18 feet tall, allowing the projected performers to be larger than life and overwhelm the audience.

A more interactive autobiographical piece, Vesna Pavlovic's 2011 series of projected photography, *Projected Histories*, helps shape the perception of history as an expression of people's dreams and aspirations.<sup>7</sup> Pavlovic's personal connection towards these photographs is interpreted differently from every other viewer due to



*Projected Histories: Vesna Pavlovic, 2011*

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6. Krzysztof Wodiczko, PBS Art 21, *Art in the Twenty-First Century - Power*, Video, 55 minutes, September 16, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/art21/watch-now/episode-power>.

people's different backgrounds and upbringings.<sup>8</sup> Allowing the audience to look at a series as a whole from a distance and inspect the work closely is important. Each piece in PERSONAL PROJECTIONS, as well as *Projected Histories* has a specific message, that the viewers will interpret differently due to their physical juxtaposition and subjective understanding of the material. Allowing them to walk around at their leisure gave them the opportunity to inspect the video for as long or short as they'd like, and focus on dissimilar details.

### **CURATED ORDER AND SOUND**

In terms of sound, Max Richter's "24 Postcards in Full Colour," a collection of classically-composed miniatures for "ringtones" resonates with me.<sup>9</sup> Every piece is a series of variations of basic material scored for strings, piano, and electronics, however each tells a varying short story. While it is advised to listen to the CD in the composer's order, each song is strong enough to stand on its own. Listening to it in varied sequences constitutes a different overall story and experience. Similar to my work, the video scenes are curated in a specific order, however switching the order or watching pieces separately creates a different, yet convincing emotional reaction. As my audience wanders the stage, there is no possible way to have the same viewing experience as another viewer since the videos are constantly changing and fading.

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7. "Vesna Pavlović: Projected Histories," *The Frist Center for the Visual Arts*, last modified April 26, 2011, <http://fristcenter.org/news/detail/vesna-pavlovi-projected-histories>.

8. "Vesna Pavlovic," *Zeitgeist*, accessed January 2016, <http://zeitgeist-art.com/vesnapavlovic>.

9. Max Richter, "24 Postcards In Full Colour," *Max Richter Music*, last modified 2011 <http://www.maxrichtermusic.com/en/releases/view/4/Max>

## THEATRICAL LIGHTING

Due to my background in theatre, I incorporated an interplay between theatre performance and film acting. Cindy Sherman's colored film stills use highly saturated color schemes, melodramatic lighting and emotional animation of her actors.<sup>10</sup> Like



Untitled #92: Cindy Sherman, 1981

Sherman, I explored sensational dramatic pieces with exaggerated characters and exciting events, which appeal to the emotions similar to a common melodrama. I worked with stereotypical ideas about humans and identity, however unlike Sherman who depicted fictional scenes, I went further to discover my performers personal experiences. I also used slowly changing fields of overdramatic, saturated colored lighting in the installation space to create audience immersion into the atmosphere. Their clothing and skin changed colors with the moods of the video vignettes.



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene "Detach" demonstrating colored fields of light.

10. "Cindy Sherman Gallery," *MOMA.org*, Interactive photographic gallery. <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/cindysherman/#/0/>



## CONCLUSION

Digging deep and dissecting my performers lives to tell their personal stories of secretive problems and issues they have faced has been a rewarding experience. I cultivated and combined the wide range of stories I have heard has been using inspiration from these versatile artists. I've turned to these artists to solve different problems during my process, such as lighting, subject material, sound, and staging.

## ***METHODOLOGY:***

### PAST EXPERIENCE

Throughout the past few years I have grown an interest in producing, documentary work, projection art and cinematography. Last year, I worked on a series of photographs that explored the use of an LCD projector to create dramatic lighting, thus abstracting my staged models. The flawless, beautiful skin becomes an eerie, mystifying canvas as seen in the images below, *Dazed*, *Clowning*, and *Androgyny*. While working on my projection series, I became heavily involved in the documentation of live performance. It frustrated me that I couldn't control the



*Dazed*: Nikki Horowitz, 2015



*Clowning*: Nikki Horowitz, 2015



*Androgyny*: Nikki Horowitz, 2015

lighting, aesthetics, and subject material. I knew I wanted to incorporate both projection and documentation in my IP. After traveling for seven months in Europe, and experiencing the death of my grandfather, I started to think deeply about how our brains work in remembering past events and how I could stimulate these important memories by showing short video sequences. Through the exploration of these different disciplines of writing, composing, choreographing, and performing, each biographical memory vignette exposes the audience to learn about the artist's life, while gaining a better understanding of their own. I wanted my performers to explore their stimuli, turning memories into visual, tactile pieces.

### THE SCRIPT

I began by interviewing a group of random people about potent memories that have affected them. I was going to adapt these interviews into a script trained performers would reenact. I wished to simplify my scenes, using only phrases that focused on specific portions of long interviews.

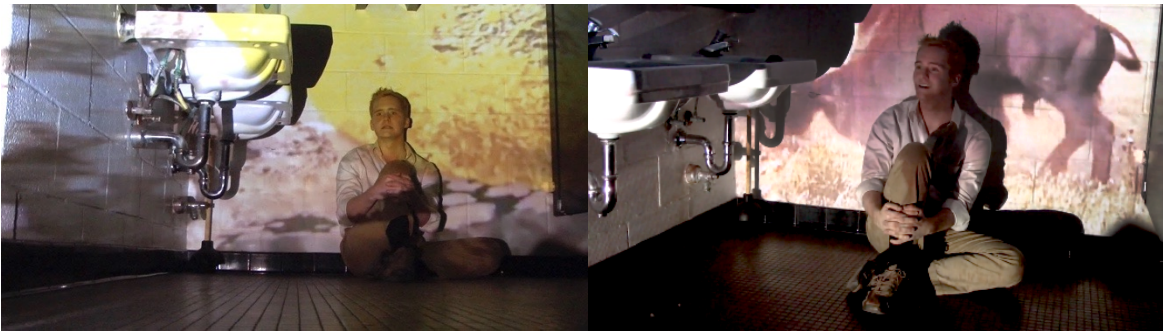
After sharing the original anonymous interviews with my performers, I realized it would be more provoking if the memories were autobiographical to each performer. I dug into the minds of two actors, Luke and Sara, creating monologues with visuals to support. As seen in *Figure 1*, I created video montage of original and found footage, that were projected in each location. These visuals told the story



*Fig. 1: Video Montage Breakdown for Luke Jackson's Script*

using metaphorical imagery, like buffalo stampedes to show men's aggression, or growing mold to connect to the smell of a men's locker room where Luke was assaulted.

As I hurried to film five scenes before winter break, I realized that the scripts were strong enough to stand on their own and the visuals were not supporting the scene. As seen in *Figure 2*, rather than focusing on the interaction between the space, performer, and speech, it seemed as if Luke was disconnected, talking as the room changed around him. This was not what I anticipated and practiced throughout my visual research. Instead of focusing on text, I needed to emphasize my visual abilities and connect the story in a more simplistic way.



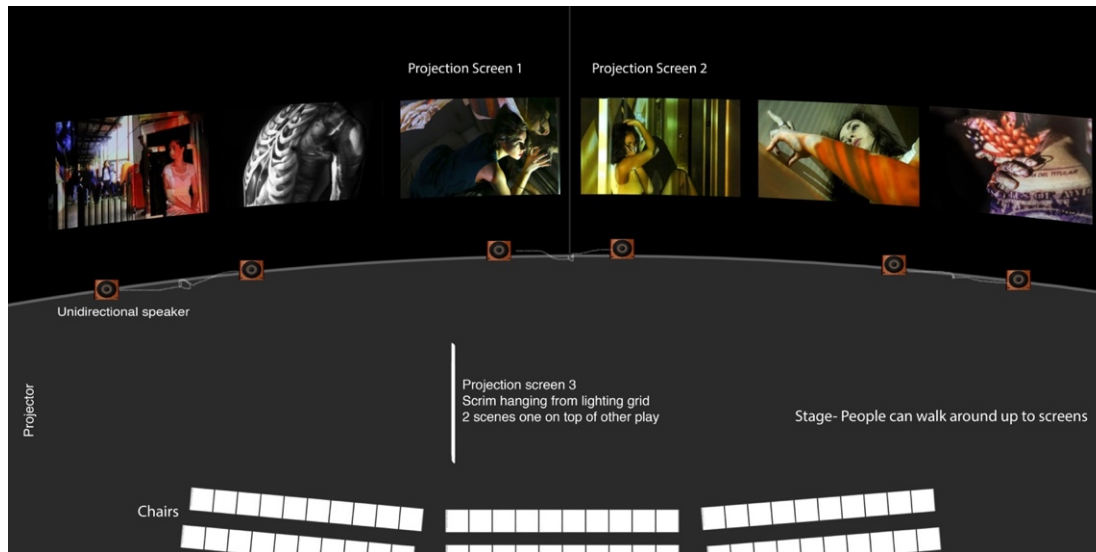
*Fig. 2: Video Stills from Luke Jackson, Scene 4*

I had trouble admitting defeat, but realized filming the scenes was necessary to gain insight on what needed to be changed. The cost of time and dent in my budget paying for camera operators set me back, however the shoots were an essential learning experience. As someone who wants to be a producer and creative director, I needed to find the right balance between what my actors and I wanted, and creating a captivating story with minimal words. I had trouble stepping out of the traditional theater realm and experimenting with more visuals.

### **OMISSION OF THE SCRIPT, REFINING**

After a much needed winter break, I decided to transform the idea of these biographical memory scripts into a series of seven 1 to 2-minute video vignettes. After interviewing seven

performers, we brainstormed dynamic concepts based on dissecting their personalities and backgrounds. Then, we explored the different senses that were stimulated during these memories and emphasized the visual and auditory content. Each scene would play on a loop with unidirectional speakers morphing audio together to create a soundscape, while the audience walks around the Video Studio as seen in *Figure 3*.



*Fig. 3: PERSONAL PROJECTIONS Ground plan concept with unidirectional speakers and 7 screens*

## **VISUAL RESEARCH**

While I was creating my script, I also started my visual research of photographic and video test shoots with an LCD Projector and DSLR camera. This was quite preliminary to see what reads well on video playback, testing both moving and still images on skin and backdrops. The visual I chose needed to tell a story and have a theme in order for it to work under the confines of my thesis. The tests include projection overlays of textures, typography, objects, people, and backdrops.

A goal of mine is to captivate my audience through disorientation; as the tactile objects and LCD images morph into one scene, I wanted my viewers to question what is real and what is virtual. I found that straight-on angles enabled the viewer to understand what is going on, while

skewed angles and slow camera movement created more perplexity. Simpler projections created stronger compositions and more legible visuals. Scenes could either have performers with large movements and stable or slowly moving visuals, or small movements with more complex, moving visuals.

Textures work better on video, rather than in photographs because they provide an emotional moving atmosphere, however it relies on the actor to tell the story. For example, in *Figure 4*, although the visual is striking, the viewer does not know what is occurring. *Figure 5* was more successful because the audience can infer that Kellan is having difficulty sleeping.



*Fig. 4: Texture overlay test*



*Fig. 5: Video Still test of Kellan Kyrak*

Using typography was a challenge because once movement was added, the type became illegible. For example, the subject is unable to move or interact with the space in *Figure 8, 9 and 10* because the type in the projection limits them. In contrast, *Figure 6 and 7* used typography as a texture, similar to that of a newspaper or a dated computer screen. These proved to be stronger visuals, however they did not work in the context of the rest of the scenes. Simplistic words or short phrases can be just as powerful as an image, so I gave each scene a title. The language is left open for interpretation and the audience can find their own experience in the ambiguous statement.

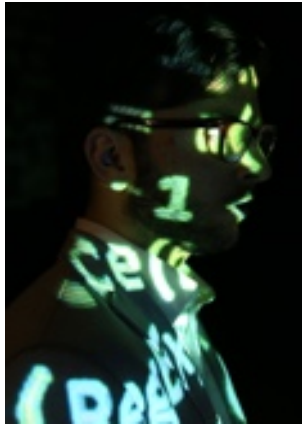


Fig. 6: Typography texture test



Fig. 7: Typography texture test



Fig. 8: Typography with texture video shoot

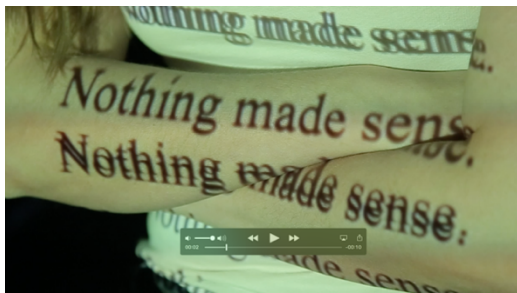


Fig. 9: Video Still typography test



Fig. 10: Video Still typography shoot

Overlaying objects onto skin was a powerful way of telling stories about my performers identity. For example, in *Figure 11*, the passport is meticulously placed on the model's back and side of the face, masking her identity. I used this test as inspiration for a similar passport shot in the scene "Homes." In *Figure 12*, placing a blooming flower over a woman's womb connects to the theme of fertility and femininity, which is mimicked in Larissa's final scene, "No Children."

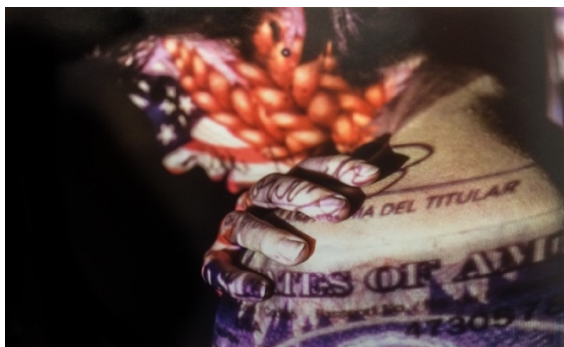


Fig. 11: Object overlay photography test

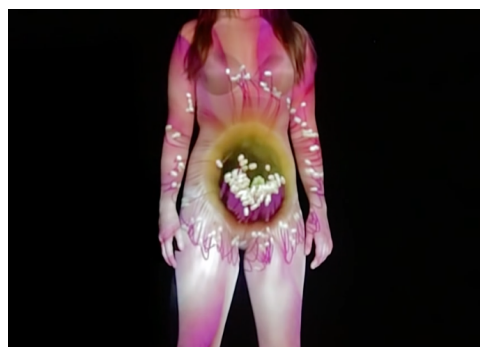


Fig. 12: Video Still of object overlay

Overlaying faces and bodies onto other faces and bodies is quite perplexing and captivating. Altering a body with projections blurs the line between the actual actor's body and its manipulated form. *Figure 13* and *14* were unsuccessful because although they are striking images, they lack a theme or reason. Adding movement to a similar set up or a personal icon created a purpose. *Figure 15*, effectively questions the gender of the subject, a theme that is seen in the news, as well as in this performers life.



*Fig. 13: Facial overlay test*

*Fig. 14: Self-portrait overlay test*

*Fig. 15: Video still body overlay test*

Some scenes needed to have more interplay between the space the actor was in and the projections. Using backdrop projections in a real environment effectively investigated the interaction between virtual and physical space as seen in *Figure 16*.



*Fig. 16: Backdrop projection test*

After researching these different tactics and types of projection overlays, I learned the best ways to create a short, provoking visual through cinema and camera movement. The videos are very similar to slowly moving photographs.

## **THE PLAGUE: A NEW START**

After a two-week illness and unplanned cancellations from actors, I was behind on my schedule. Although this seemed like lost time, my short “vacation” gave me distance to think about the work, create a stronger concept and new schedule. Instead of seven long scenes on a loop, I created seven short scenes, grouped thematically, with audio soundscapes. These scenes played in a curated order separated by theme and performer. Some scenes had a strict arc, while others were played on a loop. Some visuals were presented large on the screen by themselves, while others were smaller in scale, grouped in pairs of two, three, four, or eight. The massive scale and sensory stimulation was arresting and overwhelming; intimate subject matter at monumental scales makes the cherished memory very public.

## **THE SHOOTS / EDITING**

Due to my experimental work habits, each scene evolved based on spontaneous and collaborative ideas. I started each shoot with a concept, a folder of images and videos, and a shot list of ideas. I created visuals on illustrator, filmed or photographed visuals prior to the shoots, and used found footage from the internet. Although I was the curator of the performers autobiographies, I let them take ownership of their experience in a collaborative effort.

Each scene was in a different location, with varying visuals, actors, costumes, equipment, and movement. The shoots called for my DSLR Canon 6D, a video tripod, slider, and HD projector. The performers and I had multiple test shoots and ideas to see which one resonated the most. The test shoots taught me where to place the projector to line up the visuals and convey the right message. Many scenes needed a black background, so I hit the actor from a 45-degree angle, creating the illusion of an infinite black room. I used studio lights with barn doors, colored



gels, and diffusion paper to create side and back light and enhance the performers aesthetics.

Each scene varied in subject material to avoid redundancy. I edited the scenes separately on Final Cut Pro and put them in a curated sequence afterwards. I chose to display similar shots together to create an interesting contrast between the small differences. Some scenes were one long take of similar slowly moving visuals which mesmerized the audience. Others had a compilation of multiple shorter shots which took the audience on a narrative journey.

## ***CREATIVE WORK***

### **THE DUDERSTADT VIDEO STUDIO: AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE**

The videos appeared on two large projection screens along the cyclorama of the Video Studio. The screen is 18 feet tall by 64 feet wide, making the video projections takeover the space. The short vignettes of personal memories are presented in a sequence categorized by the theme, portraying an important aspect or event in each performer's life from news stories, gender roles, traumatic events, everyday life, to uplifting moments. I was able to curate a dynamic, continually interesting 13-minute sequence due to the video's similar technical process and visual aesthetics. They ended up cultivating an eerie and mystifying aesthetic; most potent memories happen to be dark, and projections create a rich dichotomy of watching the past while being in one's present body.

I made sure that the scenes next to each other were different in tone and compositional presentation, however moved steadily from one to the next. As an installation, I wished for no arch, but rather a smooth transitions and an immersive environment to explore on a stage of dim,

colorful lights. I coaxed the audience to enter the stage and experience the videos up close, so that they could see the great detail of each composed image and step back to see multiple videos play together. The atmosphere of intense, slowly changing colored lighting, with eerie soundscapes supported each scene. For



Fig. 17: Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene “No Children”

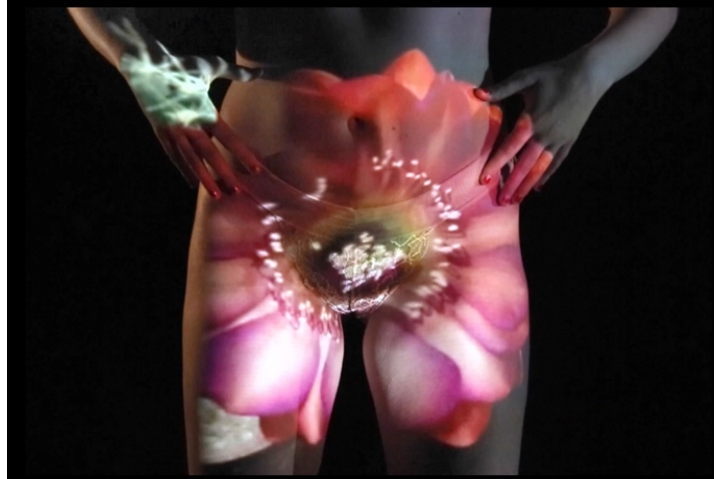
example, when the first scene, “No Children” plays, the audience was in fields of pinks mimicking the color scheme the flowers as seen in *Figure 17*. Each composition made by composers Nelson Gast, Andrew Hintzen, Ryan Shea and myself are dynamic, connecting to the title of the piece, as well as the visual meaning and tempo of the slowly moving images. The sounds emphasize the theme by revealing an aspect of that performer's identity through narrative, spoken word, or sound effects.

## THE SCENES

Allowing a large audience to view these intimate moments of projections on the tactile bodies of my performers on a big screen, explores the vulnerability of my performers. Watching the scenes together allows the audience to gain insight that everyone has gone through interesting, life changing experiences.

For example, Larissa Marten who is over 6 feet tall and has a deep voice felt awkward her whole childhood due to being “manly.” Recently she has embraced and used it to her advantage. The flower opening on Larissa’s womb in the first scene, “No Children” symbolizes

her femininity, rejection of fertility and the end of one's lineage. We chose a cactus plant because it is spiky, strong, and rough, similar to the way society depicts how a man should be. The opening and closing, as well as the images of wilting flowers show the growth and decay of a woman's body



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS Video Still; Nikki Horowitz  
"No Children" performed by Larissa Martin, 2016*

while the cactus spikes allude to unshaven, hairy legs; a strict label of masculinity. The audience stood in a field of pink light.

The scene transitions smoothly with the next title "Break," which reveals a similar initial backlit nude body. "Break" explores a car crash Caty Raupp experienced during a leisurely drive on spring break. She explained, "I vividly remember time moving so slowly and having one hundred thoughts, I was positive I was going to die." Here we see a car driving down the road on Caty's back, to portray physical pain and story through the line of her backbone. I reshot this scene with Caty's movements a bit slower, to show time moving in slow motion. We used a flash of white light on the audience with the sound of screeching tires and a crash to display the impact of the event. A ringing noise and lavender light indicated the aftermath.



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS Video Stills; Nikki Horowitz "Break" performed by Caty Raupp, 2016*

The third scene, “Homes” begins with another nude female body, but quickly transitions to a more complex storyline than the last scene which was captured in one take. “Homes” explores performer, Hojo Shin’s complicated upbringing and nationality through the strange scenes and familiar faces from the five different cities she grew up in. For example, one section displays the dangers her friends are facing in the Israeli army, as the viewer hears sirens and war cries. These videos are played one after another, as if she is moving from place to place; similar to her childhood.



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* Video Stills; Nikki Horowitz.  
“Homes” performed by Hojo Shin, 2016



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene “Homes”

The fourth scene, “Suppress” begins with a close up of the face, similar to how “Homes” ends. “Suppress” explores Kellan Kryak’s suppression of her Tourette’s Syndrome tics. We hear sounds of a doctor explaining the disorder in a repetitious manner, which escalates to an unbearable pace while blue lights flash on and off on the audience. We see images of her excessively blinking eyes, playing with her mouth, and a metaphorical eye staring right back at her, taking over her mind, as she tries to suppress it.



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* Video Stills; Nikki Horowitz.  
“Suppress” performed by Kellan Kryak, 2016



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene “Homes”

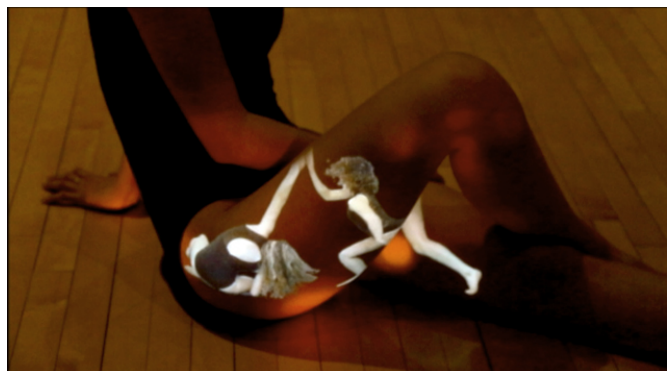
The fifth scene, “Princess” has a similar color pallet to “Suppress” and pokes fun out of society’s disapproval and fear of manly women and feminine men. We chose to shoot in woman’s dressing room using the vanity lights and clothing rack as a way to interact with the environment. Larissa wore frilly undergarments and I overlaid magazine images of male models

onto her body, tricking the mind into what is real and a new layer. I created a disconcerting, strange sound remix of the introduction of Snow Whites “A Smile and A Song” due to its theme of the struggles with being accepted and high pitched female vocals. The repetitious manner is similar to the scenes before and after, but provides a fun, whimsical break for the audience.



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene “Princess”

The sixth scene, “Rivalry” is about the manipulation that occurs in friendships, especially in the dance industry. Sheli Ruffer and Maddy Joss choreographed a dance exploring the changes you go through in a friendship, from trust and dependency, to manipulation and greed. This was filmed on green screen and then



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* Video Still; Nikki Horowitz  
“Rivalry” performed by Sheli Ruffer & Maddy Joss, 2016

re-projected onto their bodies in a dance studio. As the scene escalates in intensity, the lighting in the scene and on the audience changes from a warm red, to a jealous green. The sound and movements exemplifies the animalistic nature that occurs in the entertainment industry and workplace.



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016: Scene "Rivalry"

In the last scene "Detach," Ryan Shea alludes to the feeling of being detached from the group and entranced during an acid trip. I chose this as the closing point because it's calm, hypnotic quality allows the viewer's mind to rest.



*PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* Video Still; Nikki Horowitz  
"Detach" performed by Ryan Shea, 2016

We explore Ryan's experience in fetal position with an overlay of his blank face on top of his body. The distorted caricature is juxtaposed with electronic trance music and slowly growing and fading blue and orange lights.

I made sure my performers agreed with the sound, title, and visuals before I presented it to the public. After the Duderstadt Video Studio performance, my performers reported back,

happy with the result, identified with the scene, and claimed it was a therapeutic journey recollecting their life and identity.

### **THE BIG DAY/ AUDIENCE RESPONSE**

The installation was presented on April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in the Duderstadt Video Studio, free to the public. To my delight, the audience was filled to capacity. Unfortunately that meant that many friends were unable to see the performance. Students from all majors at the University, faculty, Ann Arbor community, visitors, and the performers watched the live fifteen-minute installation. I introduced myself and delivered a short description of the piece. I wanted the audience know the scenes were biographical to the performers and that they could stand close to the screen. Ninety people walked onto the stage and examined the large screen of slowly moving visuals. There were more people than I anticipated, and the stage became too crowded. To my surprise, most people did not move around and on the second night, the audience ended up standing much further back from the screen. Although this did not look as good on the recorded video camera screens, for first time viewers, it was important for them to follow both screens and see the whole video. Afterwards, many viewers said they wanted to stand further back because they did not want to miss seeing how the footage interacted from screen to screen. I would have preferred showcasing the scenes in a similar venue on a looped installation with less people, so the viewer could walk around without being distracted or hindered by crowds of other viewers.



Nikki Horowitz introducing *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016



I hope the audience members connected with the scenes, exploring their own similar memories. Viewers praised my composition, beautiful visuals and cohesive sound mixing. I successfully grasped many viewer's attentions by finding a balance between the massive projections, atmospheric lighting, and loud, mesmerizing soundscapes. Some were fascinated by my projection technique, while others were more engaged by the "cool" visuals or music. Many remembered the names of the scenes, which proved that it helped give context to each theme. Each viewer had a different favorite scene, which I attributed to their interests in technique, narrative, interpretation, or visual composition. Most seemed to remain engaged throughout the sequences, which I hope pushed them to understand how these sometimes overlooked and uncontrollable stimuli can dictate one's day-to-day mood and define how one lives his or her life.



Nikki Horowitz, *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* live in the Duderstadt Video Studio, 2016.  
Audience members view scenes "Suppress" and "Homes"

## ***CONCLUSION:***

The finished piece was significantly different from my initial idea. *PERSONAL PROJECTIONS* turned out to be a collaborative multimedia installation analyzing memories of seven students from the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. Using LCD projection interaction on their bodies and skin, each scene explores an aspect of their identity or an event that has

affected them drastically. I invited the audience to enter the stage so they could experience how perspective changes the composed image. They stood in fields of changing colored light, with composed soundscapes that connected with each scene's imagery.

Over the past two semesters, the performers and I have dissected each scene to understand the intricacies of their memories. I find the process for me was the greatest adventure. The performers who I thought I knew exposed themselves in fascinating, multilayered ways. My performers have interesting qualities and specific moments in their life that define them. Some of these are strange and confusing, while others are recurring themes in everyone's life. When I continue this project, I will bring more of this process into the final product.

The performance was filmed on four cameras and will be posted online for those who could not attend, as well as to show future employers the complexity of my multifaceted project. I will use the footage to submit this installation to other gallery spaces and experimental film shows, as it could be easily adapted for various spaces and themes. The videos are strong enough to be displayed separately on a loop or one after the other. In the future, I hope to create more scenes with a similar technique and group them by theme, such as a series on political views, gender roles, and travel. That would give me a stronger chance to get into themed shows. I would also like to try using the same projection technique to create a more narrative based music video, which could help my portfolio as I yearn for a job in the entertainment industry.

PERSONAL PROJECTIONS demonstrates my artistic abilities necessary to be a creative director and producer. After this long process, I've learned that I am skilled at juggling the many responsibilities of coordinating a spectacle. I prospered at connecting all the different aspects of this project from casting and creating a strong team, directing the actors, to coming up with strong concepts, art directing visuals and exploring new technical skills, to writing music, filming

and editing the scenes. I am applying to companies which will allow me to wear many hats, such as an experimental production company that works with video advertisements on important events, getting messages across in an interactive, engaging way.

During my free time, I also would like to continue collaborating with others who wish to share their stories, explore their intricacies and create meaningful, provoking work.



Nikki Horowitz, Brian Garcia, Sean Horner, and Hayden Nickel bowing at the end of the Duderstadt Video Studio Performance, 2016

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