

The Creation of Narrative Worlds in Physical Space:
a theoretical and personal examination of the artistic work
temporal understandings of impermanent places (hold still)

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Abstract:

This thesis examines the work of artist Carrie Morris as she utilizes people, space and time to create situations that illuminate invisible narratives and dynamics which usually go unnoticed and unremarked upon. This process helps the participant rediscover the world around them while also bringing them to a better understanding of who they are and how they operate within the world.

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Introduction

Part 1 - Introduction
(The tour begins in the main lobby. The TOUR GUIDE, who is wearing a red flapper dress, descends the stairs and greets the tour audience.)

TOUR GUIDE: Hello, welcome to the Michigan Theater, thank you for coming to this tour today.

Within the thesis project *temporal understandings of impermanent places (hold still)*, theories of interactivity are interwoven with theories from performance studies and the recontextualization of space in order to reinforce the idea that it is the viewer and not the work viewed which is the most dynamic element of an artwork.

I have spent over half my life working in theaters and different performance spaces. And I started to wonder what is it about a space that makes it a space that we can tell stories in. I started to think about telling stories, going backwards through my life, recalling instances where I had either listened or participated in the act - but I also thought about what is it about stories that makes them timeless, that makes them things that will exist once we are gone, in the future, far forward from where we are now. I started to think about stories told, who listens to them, sites of storytelling, my history of listening to (and of telling) stories. And that's also what this paper is about.

This theoretical basis, along with both examples from and reactions to the work itself, will be cited in order to explain the process and procedures for developing the production .

I wanted to begin with elements from my story - who I am, and how I got here. This affects the stories I tell in my work as well as in this project overall. So this paper will be divided into three parts - my personal narrative, the story of this show, and the theories that give context to the show. An examination of story, site and audience, it makes sense to me that there are three simultaneous running narratives in this thesis, and you, reader, will make up the fourth.

TOUR GUIDE (cont.):

This is the main lobby. The interior architecture is modeled after 19th century German and French castles. In this building there is over six thousand square feet of custom designed carpet, several hundred tons of plaster and eighteen chandeliers, ten in this lobby alone. That's a lot of stuff to clean after these tours go through!

Precedents and Contexts: Theoretical Encounters

Theoretical Encounters: Sound, Body/s, Breath

While a story can be explained as the telling of an event or scenario, placing the emphasis on the idea of *telling* in this definition begins to get at the form and dynamics inherent in oral narrative. Before there was the written word there was the spoken word, and orality was the main way people exchanged not only narratives (such as myths, legends) but also information - family histories, laws, gossip, etc. Authors Joseph Roach and Shelby Richardson reference the two elements needed to articulate these stories in their article 'Writing the Breast, Performing the Trace', as they emphasize sound and breath as essential elements of narrative construction (p. 54). In the essay, their examination of a live performance based on historical texts cites the actress' use of her breath as the only way to bring past events into the present (p. 59, Roach, Richardson).

TOUR GUIDE (cont.): Does anyone have any questions? I can tell you more about this area of the building, or we could move on - I haven't been working here for that long, but I really love this building. And entertainment work sort of runs in my family. My grandfather did some stuff on the radio when he was younger. He worked on radio stations in Portland and Indiana before he went into the military. He really loved the radio, Granddad used to call his radio work

I am originally from the south, and I have memories of oral history as it functioned in my own life. Growing up in Virginia, I was told stories that after floods copperheads were restless and more visible on the banks of a swollen river. My experience of this story was largely to ignore it - until one day I strayed down by the waters edge directly after a flood and actually caught a glimpse of a coiled up copperhead on the river bank. This lent truth to the tale, and I stayed away from the flooded river's edges forever after. But thinking about my history with storytelling, we can even go further back than that event of my childhood, back to my mom telling me stories when I was a child of how she grew up in Asia, talking about her travels at a very young age, as these stories led me to grow up with an interest in other cultures, and to travels of my own that began internationally when I was in my teens.

This idea of the voice as present is an important distinction when thinking about the temporal space that a live narrative inhabits, and can be explained by examining the layers of retelling that Roach and Richardson are pointing to in their cited example. The original event (an operation performed in the mid-18th century to remove a tumor) is recast in writing (the subject having written her own account, while conscious); the actress then performs her interpretation of that account in the present, compounding the author's experience, the author's narrative, the actress' performance and experience of that performance through her body, using the formal element of her breath. In this way, this compounded experience becomes not one person's story retold, but creates a multiple-beinged present.

The experience reading about the original event described, as well as the performance, then becomes an event which could be the reader's personal present as well. Anyone could have a tumor removed, could tell the story of this experience – it is familiar to the physical self. This event crosses through time and through bodies, this experience transcends history in order to become a narrative that can be superimposed over one's own existence, through the body, through the breath. This idea of the breath as a formal element of narrative can also be explained as being similar to a flute or wind instrument - instruments which can be played, which can only function, with the addition of breath.

It is the body and breath which make up the formal elements of oral narrative, and which are also the common ground that a narrative resonates in. It is how narratives relate to this body that we inhabit which create a visceral experience. It is this visceral experience which all artistic experience strives for - to resonate across time, across social and physical categorization.

"live daydreams", because his voice got into people's heads and took them somewhere else. Even if that somewhere else was tomorrow's weather forecast. I dunno if anyone would really call what he did entertainment, more like announcement stuff... **My grandad** is now 79, so his memory comes and goes...



Then we can go back further, to my grandparents, who also had their experiences in storytelling. I remembered that my grandfather had done some radio work, and began interviews with him, but and finding out what he really did was tough. The more I talked with him, the more he reminded me of my grandmother, who had struggled with dementia the last few years of her life. I began to make a connection between the technology to record his voice and the deterioration of our bodies over time. I wanted to find his old clips, because I knew they would not have aged – but I didn't know if it would be better for me to know him as he was then, or to know him as he is now.

Theoretical Encounters: Shared Time, Performance and Mortality

If the form of an oral narrative is made up of sound and breath, then it is the audience or receiver of this narrative that contributes to its being planted in the present, as well as being an element affecting the construction of the narrative overall. Various performance theorists offer various definitions of how time is reflected in performance dynamics. Ethnographer Dwight Conquergood talks about the study of ethnographic performance as a forum for “creating shared time” (page 183). Richard Bauman places performance in the present, while anthropologist Victor Turner places it in the future, as something that will cast forward an action or gesture (Bauman, p. 89; Turner, p. 158). And theorist Richard Schechner’s definition of performance straddles both past (in the recreation in performance of historic events as restored behavior) and present (occurring in the present, in front of others) (Schechner, p. 203). The theory which greatly affected the development of this show is a citation of performance from feminist performance scholar Jill Dolan, who speaks not about where performance is placed in time but where time places us, the viewer of a performance. Her point begins with a quote from Herb Blau, who states “when we speak of...presence in acting, we must also speak of its absence, the dimensionality of time through the actor, the fact that he who is performing can die there in front of your eyes; is in fact doing so. Of all the performing arts, the theater stinks most of mortality.” (Blau, p. 83).



TOUR GUIDE (Cont.): in icebox technology in 1933, flat screen monitors now serve to remind us of the cutting edge in image viewing technology available today.

However, before we can go forward, we must first look to the past. Before flatscreen monitors, but after vaudeville, the world was introduced to “talkies,” films with sound – which eventually became so popular that they resulted in the disbanding of the silent film’s orchestras, the demise of vaudeville entirely, and the beginning of Hollywood’s Golden Age.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Michigan

Dolan goes on to state that “I think sharing that liveness promotes a necessary and moving confrontation with mortality...in performance, we’re dying together”(p. 459).

It is this group dynamic, this sharing of time then that is essential not only to the understanding of the medium but also the experience of the work. The duration of performance events in other cultures is also important when thinking about how they are received, evidenced in Indonesian shadow puppet shows (which traditionally run a minimum of eight hours) which were explained as being designed “originally not for human audiences, but for an audience of the gods” (personal interview, Mbala Nkanga). In this example, the relationship of this voiced cosmology to its human audience is not a consideration. However poetic this explanation may sound, it leaves me with some unanswered questions. If shadow puppetry was created for the gods, then why are human audiences the ones that the performers respond to? Traditional puppetry was not sponsored by religious organizations, but by royal families in the past, and by corporate sponsors in the present (Soegito, personal interview). If this performance is only for the gods, then who pays the puppeteers? This lengthy duration of time may have originated as an otherworldly audience consideration, but to deny the form’s human audience is impossible, both for the scholar as well as for the performer. Part of the magic of the show is having time to talk with other audience members, go get food, come back, watch the dhalang (narrator and puppeteer) improvise about current events and about other audience members – and the dhalang will also incorporate the responses he receives from the audience into his work.



So as a young girl I was listening to stories about far away places, stories about reaching many people with the use of radio - but the stories sometimes changed depending on what kind of mood my family members are in and what I remember or forget as the years go on. When I tell these stories now, if one of my family members is present, they will chime in about how I forgot this

TOUR GUIDE(cont.): Theater continued to be Ann Arbor’s premiere showplace for live stage entertainment, which included national touring theater and opera companies, local community organizations, and University of Michigan events. The largest audiences, however, came for the movies.

In this way, this group of viewers becomes active participants in the creation of the performance.

Part 2 - The audience

(The walking tour enters the theater and the theater doors shut behind them. The film begins with a montage of famous movies from the 30's, 40's 50's, through the end of the century, which speed up as they get more recent. The voice of the TOUR GUIDE is heard over the speakers.)

AUDIO TRACK: *(TOUR GUIDE voice over)* Of course it's not always film anymore, sometimes it's now video. But whether film or video, light is still the main element used to create these worlds. And its not only Hollywood stars that we can see anymore when we go to the movies, but real stars, as the technology to make films and the technology to shoot films gets better and better, making things look more and more realistic. These 3-D spaces are projected on a flat wall, and we lose ourselves in these realities that look real but aren't. Kind of like postcards. "Wish you were here."



detail or that one, or reinforce my narrative with their memories of the same event and/or discovery.

These realities that we call memory change as time goes on and depending on who is present, so that it no longer becomes a recounting of facts and events but an act of construction.

I realized that if this project is about storytelling as a form of analysis, it cannot be a factual analysis or an analysis that can come to any sort of proven or finite point. Its main point is not information but wisdom - something that will not give us proven hypotheses but that may shed some light on the human condition as I have experienced and understand it. The acquisition of wisdom is cumulative - aquired over time, not instantaneously. So also is a narrative imparted upon the viewer over a specific duration. In the same whay that narratives pass from beginning to end, in the same way that time passes through our life spans, these cycles are repeated and intertwined. We learn from our own experiences as well as from stories told by others.

Theoretical Encounters: Space and Time, Psyche and Space

The examination of the formal elements of this artwork continues with the element of site. In this work specifically the site is the foundation, it is the medium around which the installed elements are designed. Referencing the dynamics of Installation Art, author Claire Bishop notes when exploring the relationship of site to the viewer “Instead of representing texture, space, light and so on (as in traditional painting) installation art presents these elements directly for us to experience” (p. 11). The elements inherent to the site become the medium of the work itself, including the site’s cultural and social history. Not only how the space was built, but also how it was used, how it functions for an occupant.

As this project was developed it became obvious that it must be staged in a theater, but needed to be an experience that was more engaging for the viewer than a traditional performed monologue or stage play. Examining a list of local theaters, the Michigan Theater was a restored historic theater, a space for live performance and a venue for films, filling the conceptual and formal requirements for this work. The process then became about looking for ways to utilize this space in order to give new meaning to the work performed there and to create a performance that would illuminate unseen dynamics of the space itself.

Also researched for this project was artist Rirkrit Tiravanija’s retrospective tour through a gallery which held no actual work, prompting further thoughts about the idea of a vocalized narrative that could suggest to participants elements which did not actually exist in a space (Nesbit, Obrist, Tiravanija, p. 184). In this project there was a need to tell a story not only about the building, but also a story that would extend to the viewer, about the combination of this space and its occupants and how this combination affects how one sees the present and then shapes the future. With these thoughts in mind, the relationship of the physical space to a physical body began to become more articulated, and the narrative

TOUR GUIDE(cont): We can capture on film things we have never seen before, and things that don’t exist We can make the past the present, speed up and slow down time (*CLIPS FROM FAMOUS OLD MOVIES, SPEED THROUGH*). Those films of the 30’s and 40’s are now only looked at for their historical value, not for their entertainment value. They are more useful as a cultural marker, a record of styles, values and attitudes that were of a certain time.

I never met anyone famous in real life. My grandmother got mistaken for Nancy Regan a lot. And I’ve heard that Ronald Regan was an actor, but I’ve never seen any of his films. His memory went too, hu.

continued to develop around these elements. In addition, while researching performance at large, the term ‘contextual theater’ was one that came up in reference to this work. This term can be explained as a method of creating a context in which an actor or audience is encouraged to suspend their disbelief and feel as if they freely exist within that context, the most common forms being theme parks, video games and haunted houses. Was a walking tour of the Michigan Theater in itself an act of contextual theater? What conditions would be necessary for an audience to exist freely within the context of this space - and what did that mean? How were the dynamics of performative spaces intertwined with movies and performance and what context specifically did the Michigan Theater lend to its audiences? While researching the history of the building, the Michigan Theater Executive Director Russ Collins offered his thoughts concerning the architecture of the theater as well as the form of cinema itself. According to Mr. Collins, the context of early cinema was very different, shown in storefront type venues, not in movie houses. The grand theaters of the early 20th century (theaters the Michigan is modeled after), though they showcased live performances (specifically vaudeville, which was seen as a family friendly entertainment), were referred to as ‘opera houses’, because theater was still seen as a bawdy art form, and most actors and actresses considered “pimps and whores” (Collins,

*(END FILM WITH PROJECTION OF ASTRONAUT,
WHICH FADES OUT SLOWLY TO WHITE LIGHT.)*

AUDIO TRACK (cont.): You know, I heard this quote one time, and it was about a house, but I think it still applies - this guy said, the thing it takes to make a house a home is not what you put in it or how long you live in it. It’s a place where you feel comfortable daydreaming. That a house is a home not because it holds your stuff but because it holds your dreams, not what you have but the things you’ve put out into the air and lost to time or forgetting or a missed moment or whatever. If that’s how a house functions as a home, then does a stage function as a theater only when it serves as a shell to project these narratives, dream landscapes and worlds into? Is humanity then about what we have lost instead of what we’ve held onto?

personal interview). These opera houses were designed with grand interiors based on 18th century German and European castles and functioned as venues for middle class audiences to see live performances of family-oriented content (Collins). Mr. Collins went on to explain that when silent films began to tour with live accompaniment, they were more likely to be shown in opera houses instead of cinemas, because these acoustics (designed for live music) were better. However, Mr. Collins was quick to point out that most of the architectural details in the theater were decorative instead of functional, the interior of the building itself fabricated to further support (for the audience) this idea of a grandiose reality instead of the theater's functionality.

It was at this point that Mr. Collins began to speak out against current opinions in modern cinema trends, specifically the idea that cinemas were headed in a more interactive, immersive viewing experience, solidly stating "I reject that idea." His feeling is that being able to sit down in a space that is acknowledged as a viewing space is integral to the enjoyment of a film. That if the viewer is immersed so completely that they believed themselves to be in the same situation as the characters on screen the experience would be too real, too frightening. There would be no reality to escape to. That being able to physically see the edges of a film screen provided a safety net, a reminder that the viewer was still in their seats, still themselves, still in their own body. Mr. Collins' belief that the contemporary trend to design movie houses so that they are as non-intrusive as possible is a mistake. That to make the theater disappear, to make the viewer forget their body, is to deny those entities as integral characters in the viewing experience. This metaphor of the relationship between the physical theater and the physical body eventually became incorporated into the structure of the show's narrative.

In Gaston Bachelard's book Poetics of Space, the author examines a connection between the human psyche and the spaces in a house. He discusses at length the idea of "topoanalysis," the systematic study of the sites of our intimate lives, incorporating a metaphor of "life as theater" to

(Film ends, projecting only white light on screen.)

What does it feel like to live in your dreams all the time?

My grandmother, the one that looked like Nancy Regan, she passed away suddenly after a long bout where she had trouble distinguishing between hallucination and reality. It was difficult for her to remember who she was, where she was and how old she was. We kept having to tell her not only who she was but who we were. Sometimes after the

emphasize his study (Bachelard, p. 7).

“In the theater of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant roles. At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being’s stability - a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, when he sets out in search of things past, wants time to “suspend” it’s flight. In it’s countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That’s what space is for” (Bachelard, p. 8).

This quote is relevant to this project specifically because it references how a physical layout affects our emotional attachment to a space, while also touching on our fascination with the past (here, “things past”) and alludes to our obsession with immortality (“a being who does not want to melt away”).

The show was structured around a tour of the physical space, incorporating a narrative that called attention to the bodies of the viewers as elements occupying this space that brought with them specific contexts that changed the space itself. However, the issue of how audiences absorb false realities seen on screen also came into play, as this colors one’s experiences in the present. This building specifically is striking because of its reference to another time, but it is this connection with lost time that is also the defining factor between live performance and film. For all the amazing worlds that can be realistically created in film, the medium can never exist in the present or the future. It is what makes science fiction films dated the minute they are set on celluloid. Thinking about how this affects viewers in the present, it is the bodies of viewers who age, while it is the bodies of the actors and actresses who are on screen that will stay the same. One of the many ways film inhabits everyday life is the abundance of people who alter their bodies in order to reflect ideals seen on the screen, instead of being content with physical selves that reflect their age. These

AUDIO TRACK 2
(cont.):
fourth or
fifth time of
reminding her
who I was,
I would stay
silent when
she would talk
to me as if I
was my mom, or
her sister. I
would let her
think I was
whoever she
wanted me to
be. If this
theater is
a space for
dreaming, the
people on that
screen can
be anything
to anyone.
Anyone can
be a mother
or sister or
lover. But
who are they
really?

attempts to look immortal, ageless, to exist in the present while looking the way one may have looked years ago can also be seen in the story of the Michigan Theater as well. In the same way that viewers age, the theater has also gone through a process of aging and reconstruction. This connection of time (and specifically our time, our life spans) to space is one that Foucault also wrote about in his essay *Of Other Spaces*. In it he describes external space as “a heterogeneous space...we do not live in a kind of void, in which we could place beings and things...we live in a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to each other” (Foucault, p. 23). He then goes on to define sites within external space as falling into two major categories - utopias (“sites with no real place...they present society itself in perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but...fundamentally unreal spaces”) and heterotopias. Heterotopias are described as being:

“Real places...which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia, in which the real sites...are simultaneously contested and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of reality, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality...I believe that between these utopias and heterotopias there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror...In the mirror I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space... am over there, where I am not; a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself... From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there...” (Foucault, p. 24).

Interestingly enough, Foucault ends his ruminations on space and our timely occupations of it (be those occupations simultaneous or singular) with an examination of the heterotopia of the cemetery, the final resting place/space and another nod to the relationship between life span and spatial dynamics.

If the function of art is to bring humanity to a more inclusive understanding of themselves and their place in the world, then I realized that I needed to make a heterotopia that would juxtapose the reality of live performance with the history of the fantastic worlds of cinema, and place it within a physical structure which could shed light on the experience of existing in this present and past condition simultaneously. Possibly shedding light on our attempts at immortality in the face of the inevitable reality that time moves forward - and that our bodies move with it.

When thinking about art and our observations, our senses, how we take in information, we cannot forget our bodies. We are as much a character in this narrative as the art observed, whether that art work is two-dimensional, kinetic, three-dimensional, virtual, etc. The Michigan Theater is a site built specifically to mimic a time gone by, to the point of having false structural details within their architecture. The site works to make the viewer forget the present and believe we have returned to the past - but it is our bodies that remind us of the present, it is our bodies that will not let us forget the time we are in, how old we are, what year this is, even when our minds no longer know, when we are unable to hold onto this information.

I will now examine the creative work and artistic encounters that preceded this specific piece, precedents that I reference in my own mind when thinking about the project in terms of form and content.

Precedents and Contexts: Artistic Encounters

Artistic Encounter: You vs. Infinity



In April of 2006 I worked on several installations in Nichol's Arboretum (a local park) which were based on audience interactions and land management issues. The image to the left is of one of these installation sites: almost three hundred LED lit viewer-activated glowing shrines in the Arb's Peony garden. This installation specifically was based on creating multiples of objects designed to reference the numerous religions and belief systems in the world with deities based in nature, then distributing those objects in such a way that viewers of the exhibit would be encouraged to distribute and redistribute them as they wished, making new compositions almost daily.

Before this project, I had limited experience installing artwork outside, and something that Professor Beth Diamond pointed out to me was the fact that once you put any object outside, because it registers not against the ceiling and walls of the gallery, but against the sky, "your scale automatically becomes infinity."



The "I ♥ U" composition on the left is one which was created one day by an unknown viewer, and seeing it I realized how dynamic audience interaction with the work itself could be. I began to think about how I could give the viewer objects that they could not only arrange in a composition of their own, but objects which they would arrange against the sky - in a sense, give them agency against infinity.



I began to work with objects I knew could technically compete against the sky – large weather balloons filled with helium. My first experiment was a critique where I built small led light sources that I installed into the balloons, then talked the critique group through a narrative where I asked them to think up any wish they wanted, then once they had their wish, to turn their balloon's light on.



Their balloon was thus “filled up” with their wish, and we walked them outside and let them go against the night sky.



Some participants remarked that the balloons, when they floated, made their wishes look like stars in the sky. Others talked about the reality that these objects were not ephemeral, that they would eventually pop and the resulting litter would float to the earth. I began to realize that to make wishes tangible objects had its baggage. That, although released against the sky, these objects – and we - are tied to the earth. There is something innately human about that, about wanting to compete against infinity and being unable to because of our physical form.

Artistic Encounter: Spatial Narratives



One of the things I saw during my research in Indonesia this summer that affected this project was the monument of Brobodour. It is one of the largest Hindu monuments ever built - with 13 stories, the viewer walks through several different floors or levels in order to get to the top.



And as you walk, you notice that carved into the sides of the stone walls are panels of images – these images tell the tale of a folk hero whom you follow through his life until he reaches enlightenment. The story was designed and built during the ninth century utilizing only images, so that people who could not read could still learn the tale.



Following this giant stone comic book, as the character gets closer to enlightenment, the viewer also gets closer to the top of the monument –



until at the end of the story the viewer looks down over the landscape, also having reached in physical space the vantage point of a god figure. I started to think about how we structure stories in space and how the act of moving people/an audience through space could affect a narrative.



Artistic Encounter: Cardiff's Her Long Black Hair

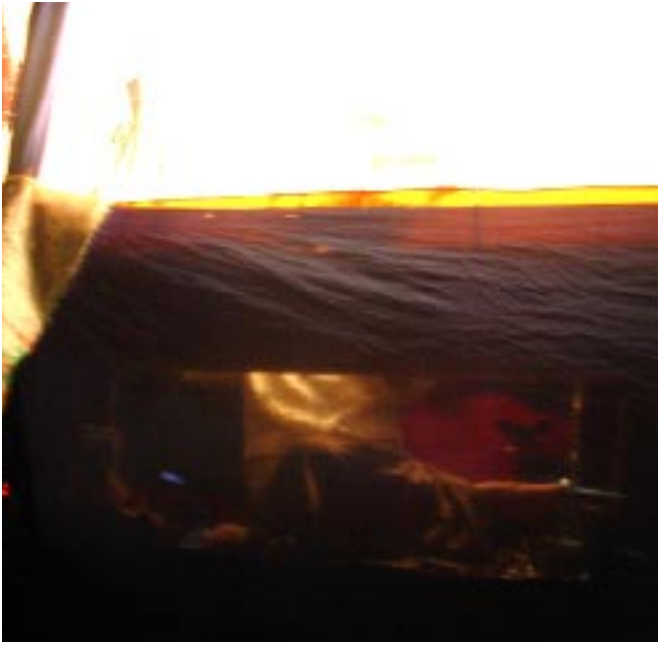
A second artistic work that affected this project was artist Janet Cardiff's public walk in Central Park summer 2005 titled "Her Long Black Hair". Cardiff utilized found photos of an unknown woman in the park years ago, set them against a narrative composed on recorded interviews about the park as well as the act of walking, and compiled these into an audio CD which the participant takes with them on the 45 minute journey. Cardiff's use of these found photos combined with the viewer's presence as they participate in this walk touches on the idea of past and present simultaneity which was important to this project. Cardiff is also known for developing binaural



Artistic Encounter: Indonesian Shadow Puppetry

Another part of my research in Indonesia this past summer was the study of multimedia shadow puppetry. During my research, the more shows I watched the more I realized that it was the narrative and not the puppet objects that really make up the core of the discipline and practice. There is a long tradition of oral narrative in this country. One puppeteer will traditionally play all the characters, throwing their voice. Also, the shows generally run about 8 hours, and the narrators will incorporate local politics, gossip about people, current events into their stories, which come from a limited number of tales (mainly the Ramayana, the Mahabaratah and several others in the tradition).





Once I realized that it was this narrator that made the show, I decided I needed to become more centrally involved in my own work. This was the real beginning of my desire to step out from behind the screen.

Telling: The Process of Creating a Narrative World in Physical Space



There was a building down the street from the exit of the Michigan Theater called the Frieze Building. It was over 100 years old, and during the run of the show it was in the midst of being torn down.



After several shows, I received calls from friends jokingly asking if I had arranged for the demolition of the Frieze as the final moment of the performance.

However, these images of the Frieze Building's demise illustrate one of the points that was central to this show. In these photos, you can see the interiors of the building as it is torn down, you see the different physical layers of the architecture - but these layers are not the only thing that makes a building a building. These images illustrate what's behind a building - but it really doesn't begin to touch it.



I knew that for this project I wanted to work in a theater, but I also knew that I needed the physical space to be a part of the work itself. So I began to ask ‘what makes a theater a theater’ – a place where we take these narratives and live with them for awhile.

I gained access to the building’s archives and used this to build on the script I had been working on. I began to develop a story based around the history of the building, my history and the idea of the building as a character – also, as this was originally a vaudeville and movie palace, I began to think more about the distinction between live theater and pre-recorded film and video – and more about how time functions both in a theater and in relation to our lives.



Act 1: The Tour (Reality vs. Fiction)



Based on some of the tour guides I'd seen while wandering through the building and on the history of the building I'd read and researched, I anchored the show in this idea of a tour, and this character in that of a tour guide. It was important for me to have my audience physically travel through the space, and anchoring the structure of the show in a tour of the theater was a good conceptual basis for this character but also served a very functional purpose. As the tour began, this format also began to reveal the discrepancy between reality and fiction in this space.

During Act 1, the Tour Guide directs the tour audience's attention to interior architecture,



walls and stairways,



chandeliers,



the signage.



She speaks about the difference between what had originally been installed and what was currently up (the fact that the signage, once Tiffany Glass, was now plastic; that the gold columns were no longer gold anymore).



She begins to draw attention to the fact that we are in an environment that has been constructed to be grand, but was now just a historic restoration, like a movie set - or, as one of the tour participants said



She also mentions a grandfather who used to work on the radio, his voice getting into people's heads and taking them to other places,



noting that both he and the Michigan Theater were the same age, 79 years old,



before continuing with the history of the theater. The Michigan had originally been built to operate as both a vaudeville and movie palace. This begins a strain of one of the main themes in the show, that of history vs. memory.



She goes on to describe the change during the early 20th century of vaudeville to talkies (films with sound) which resulted in the demise of vaudeville (live theater). She then ushers the audience into the main theater to watch a short film, a history and commentary about not only the Michigan Theater but about the history of the filmic medium.



Act 2: Film (History vs. Memory)

It is during Act 2 when the tour first really begins to break down. The film is grainy and distorted, the audio commentary begins about the history of the medium but descends into personal reflection. (Click the image below to play a short video clip of this moment in the main theater).



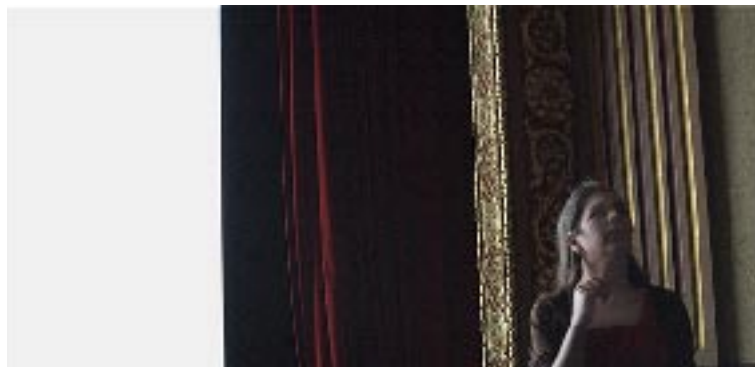
The quote from Gaston Bachelard referenced in the audio narrative of this film relates the human psyche to the spaces of a house, and begins to point to the parallel between the physical body and the theater that we are in.



This idea manifests itself in the narrative - as the tour guide returns, she also begins to show signs of confusion.



The blurring of the line between history and memory is manifesting itself in her, and it affects her memory of the space, as she attempts to continue the tour. However, as she moves deeper into the space of the building, her condition worsens. (Click the image directly below to watch a short video from this moment in the work.)



Act 3: Dressing Rooms (Public vs. Private)

The tour moves from a narrative of the building's renovation to the dressing rooms, a space where physical bodies are costumed, masked, and changed. The audio narrative follows the tour (wired into the dressing rooms' intercom speakers) and relates stories and reflections on physical bodies breaking down, the passage of time, the inability to stop this time, physical imperfections revealed and masked and allusions to wanting to be movie stars, immortal on the silver screen.



The narrator's movements become very slow, and her connection to the audience is forgotten. They are left to look



and listen, as the audio narrative continues during this entire act.



The narrator also listens, but is lost in thought - this is the first time she is in the same space as the audio narrative, and she begins to react to it. She examines her body in the mirrors -



- and again, the relationship to the theater's renovation is brought up, the idea of people wanting to look the same. She sees lipstick and puts it on, beginning to change her physical appearance.





This is the most compounded public/private interaction of the show, and the culmination of this character's emotional journey. The feedback I've gotten about this moment is the most varied reaction to the work – comments range from participants wanting to smear lipstick all over their faces right along with me to other participants feeling like they shouldn't be looking at me to participants having trouble believing the final moments during this act because they know me outside of my work in this show as an actor, and they know I wouldn't do this clichéd gesture – but that this character would. I'm still trying to figure out how to reconcile this moment with this character in a physical and gestural way.



Once she notices the audience again, she attempts to continue the tour, but is unable to talk about the space they are in (click the image above to view a short video clip of this moment in the show).

Attempting to continue the tour, the tour guide leads the audience back down the stairs, but cannot collect her thoughts.



She has unraveled.



The tour moves to the basement, where the question of who is in charge of this tour anymore raises it's head.

She realizes she is no longer
in control.



Searching for the exit,
the audience is led to the
backstage area behind the
projection screen, where
the same video history that
they watched during Act 2 is
playing, only backwards this
time. The tour guide declares
the tour over, and begins
to turn off all the lights
in the space, effectively
closing it down, abandoning
the group, abandoning the
tour.



Act 4: Backstage (Entrances and Exits,
or vs. compounded)

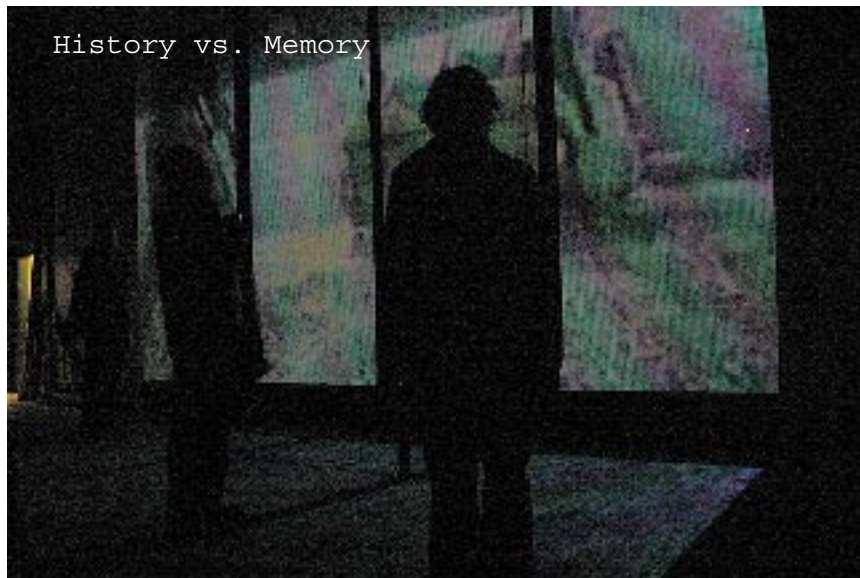
(Click the image below to see a
short video of the moments from
this portion of the show.)



It is the act



of asking the audience to
look first at these figures of
movie stars,



which are transformed, faded,
into mages of themselves
taped earlier during the tour
that establishes the agency
referenced previously.



As the house lights are raised, where we watched at the
screen of the theater, the theater now looks back at us.
The gaze has been flipped. Instead of standing at the top of
Brobodour and looking out over the landscape, we are now
the movie stars that this theater gazes up at.

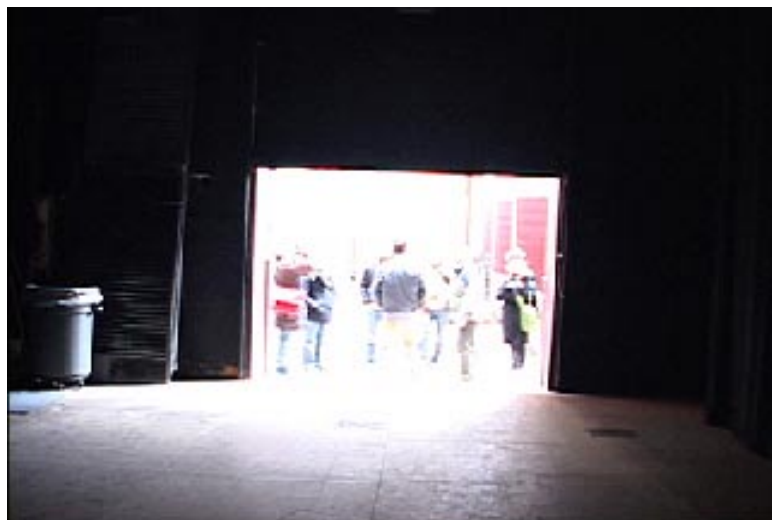
And as the audio track urges
the audience to walk out of
the theater and create their
own stories



it gives them reason to look
- not up at the screen



but out at the world.



And as they walk away,
they leave a space where
these elements have been
compounded, where it is
not an issue of reality VS
fiction, of history VS memory,
of public VS private - but a
space where one cannot exist
without the other.



Conclusion: Post-Show Reflections

Thinking back through the development of this project, there were several dynamics that were important to me when creating this work. I knew I wanted a site that was referencing history in some way, whether a site of a historical event or a historical building; I knew I wanted to engage the audience physically within the work, to have their physical presence within the space be brought attention to and to change their understanding of this place; and I knew that I wanted to be more present in the piece. In these first two details the work begins to be able to be classified as Installation Art, but it became clear as the script developed that I needed to juxtapose the history of this site with some kind of live performance, in order to complete the comparison between past and present. This is where my performance as tour guide came into play.

However, it is the elements of the work which developed or were realized during and after the production was completed which I would also like to touch on. I did not comprehend how much the audience's presence would affect not only my performance but also the perception of the work. The impact of the physical space of the venue on the content of the work was a second element which I underestimated, as I held rehearsals outside of the space which affected the reception of the content of the work. During a critique with artist Danielle Abrams, she advised me of the importance of both of these elements within the development of the overall narrative of the work, suggesting that I "give more room for the audience to react, less structure, more time for things to happen" (Abrams, personal interview). As I look back over the process of the show's development and consider each essential element, I reflect on where I've started, what I've learned and what this project has become.

Exits and Entrances: to what end

While working on this project, I came up against a narrative line that was anchored in the idea of losing time, which was a much darker tone that I believed the piece could provide. In order to point out the differences between this physical space and its live occupants, between the unreality of film and the reality of existing in the present, I was continually reminding the viewer that they were under the affects of time, that they would age and eventually pass away. This seemed like an understood facet of human existence, not a detail that needed to be emphasized and not where I wanted to end this show. I was stuck – I felt like I could not provide or create a heterotopia, because in order to do so we must deny to ourselves that we are human, and this is impossible. However, I realized that it is this humanity which gives film and theater its life, and that to continually look to the past was self-defeating. This show needed to conclude with an emphasis not on our loss of time, not on the simultaneity of past and present but a celebration of the present and a return to the real world, to the present as an thing that the theater wants to be but never can. At the end of the show, the audience is informed that it is their responsibility to keep creating narratives, and the metaphor of theater as life is continued as the show ends not as a leaving of the space and a leaving behind of this artistic experience, but a reaffirmation of the viewer's roles to live life fully in the present in order to keep creating fodder for these heterotopic spaces. This final act references movies, but becomes about not living in them, but about moving through them, to exist in the present. A reminder that our lives are better than any movie can be.

In that final moment where the audience is called to live, this project becomes bigger than the site-specific installation that I set out to create. To say that this show is specific to one site is to limit what the work can be. Though it pulls from the archives of the Michigan Theater, in the end this work is not about the structure it inhabits, but about the viewers moving through it. In this way, while not being specific to a site, perhaps the show is specific to all of us, in that it is accessible to all of us. *temporal understandings...* tells a story that is anchored in a theater, in our bodies and in our lives all at once. A story that serves as a reminder to go out and keep living.

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Stagemanager: Jim Leija

Video Plant/Video Operator: Adrienne Vetter

Michigan Theater Technical Director: J. Scott Clarke

Michigan Theater Facilities Manager: Amanda Strong

The audio and tech staff at the Michigan Theater – Ricco, Larry and Walt.

Thank you.

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Appendix 1: Performance Script

temporal understandings of impermanent places (hold still)
By Carrie Morris
With selected text courtesy of the Michigan Theater

Part 1 – Introduction

(The tour begins in the main lobby. The TOUR GUIDE, who is wearing a red flapper dress, descends the stairs and greets the tour audience.)

TOUR GUIDE: Hello. Welcome to the Michigan Theater, thank you for coming to this tour today, I will be your tour guide as we walk through the history and details of the building. We will talk a little bit today both about the theater itself, but also about the history of the Michigan Theater in relation to the community of Ann Arbor as a whole. Everyone ready? Great, let's begin.

This theater was built in 1928. This is the main lobby. The interior architecture is modeled after 19th century German and French castles. In this building there is over six thousand square feet of custom designed carpet, several hundred tons of plaster and eighteen chandeliers, ten in this lobby alone. That's a lot of stuff to clean after these tours go through!

If we go up the stairs here, then to the left (you can count them but I'll tell you right now there's 38) we can get a closer look at the decorative columns along this wall. All of the details here were real gold originally, taken out when the remodeling was done, and now its been painted. You can touch them, go ahead. There are exactly 14 mirrors throughout the building, all fabricated by a local company in Kalamazoo. Let's stop here. I also wanted to draw your attention to these signs here. Asile Eight, Asile Seven, Ladies' Restrooms. Now the original signs were lit by small flickering gas lamps, though now for safety reasons the theater uses electric lights. These signs themselves are now plastic, but were modeled after the original designs, which were donated from the Tiffany Glass Company for the grand opening.

Now, if you take a look around and think for a minute about the details I am giving you about this space, you may notice a pattern. Can you guess what it is? It's that most of these interior elements, like these columns and signs, are not structural, but decorative. They (in addition to the required employee uniforms) are designed in order to be reflective of the time period when the theater originally opened. So that when viewers enter the theater, they feel the original grandeur of the building as it was originally meant to be experienced. Can you feel it?

After the shows at the Michigan during the early 20th century, the lobby was not only

an entranceway to the building, but also a place to see and be seen. Arriving and departing audiences would usually stop for a moment and look around, admiring the architecture and the latest fashions, as people generally got very dressed up to see the shows. Lets take a moment and admire the view before we make our grand entrance. (pause.) Great.

Does anyone have any questions? I can tell you more about this area of the building, or we could move on – I haven't been working here for that long, but I really love this building. And entertainment work sort of runs in my family. My grandfather did some stuff on the radio when he was younger. He worked on radio stations in Portland and Indiana before he went into the military. He really loved the radio, Granddad used to call his radio work “live daydreams”, because his voice got into people's heads and took them somewhere else. Even if that somewhere else was tomorrow's weather forecast. I dunno if anyone would really call what he did entertainment, more like announcement stuff... My Granddad is now 79, so his memory comes and goes...

The Michigan Theater is also 79 years old. It was constructed and furnished by the W. S. Butterfield Company, which operated several motion picture and vaudeville theaters in the state of Michigan. However, the man behind the dream of the Michigan Theater was a businessman from Italy named Angelo Poulos. Only having lived in Ann Arbor for five years, he commissioned Detroit architect Maurice Finkel to design his dream: a grand vaudeville and movie palace in Ann Arbor. Finkel called it “a Shrine to Art. . . not built for today only, but constructed in the hopes that it might be a monument for years to come, and a credit to the community even when the city is many times its present size.”

Until the summer of 1929, Michigan Theater events included vaudeville and silent films with live musical accompaniment. This lobby proved an excellent showcase for sponsors' products. Where an installation of General Electric refrigerators along this wall here represented the latest in icebox technology in 1933, flat screen monitors now serve to remind us of the cutting edge in image viewing technology available today.

However, before we can go forward, we must first look to the past. Before flatscreen monitors, but after vaudeville, the world was introduced to “talkies”, films with sound – which eventually became so popular that they resulted in the disbanding of the silent film's orchestras, the demise of vaudeville entirely, and the beginning of Hollywood's Golden Age.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Michigan Theater continued to be Ann Arbor's premiere showplace for live stage entertainment, which included national touring theater and opera companies, local community organizations, and University of Michigan events. The largest audiences, however, came for the movies.

(AT THIS, THE NARRATOR GOES TO THE THEATER DOORS AND HOLDS THEM OPEN, USHERING THE WALKING TOUR AUDIENCE INSIDE, BEFORE DISAPPEARING. A FILM PLAYS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE FOLLOWING AUDIO TRACK.)

AUDIO TRACK 1: *(tour guide's voice over)* Where famous actresses and actors once performed live on the ornate stage, they now could perform in films, and for a fraction of the cost. (Do you KNOW how much Garbo's performance rider was?) The theater could still advertise "see the STARS every nite!" – and be able to show three, four, five of the biggest names in Hollywood, while only having to pay for a projectionist to make sure that little light shines through the film strips.

Part 2 – The audience

(The walking tour enters the theater and the theater doors shut behind them. The film begins with a montage of famous movies from the 30's, 40's 50's, through the end of the century, which speed up as they get more recent. The voice of the TOUR GUIDE is heard over the speakers.)

AUDIO TRACK: *(TOUR GUIDE voice over)* Of course it's not always film anymore, sometimes it's now video. But whether film or video, light is still the main element used to create these worlds. And it's not only Hollywood stars that we can see anymore when we go to the movies, but real stars, as the technology to make films and the technology to shoot films gets better and better, making things look more and more realistic. These 3-D spaces are projected on a flat wall, and we lose ourselves in these realities that look real but aren't. Kind of like postcards. "Wish you were here." (*LANDSCAPES PROJECTED*) We can capture on film things we have never seen before, and things that don't exist (*PROJECT SOME REALISTIC ANIMATED "MOVIE MAGIC"*). We can make the past the present, speed up and slow down time (*CLIPS FROM FAMOUS OLD MOVIES, SPEED THROUGH*). Those films of the 30's and 40's are now only looked at for their historical value, not for their entertainment value. They are more useful as a cultural marker, a record of styles, values and attitudes that were of a certain time.

I never met anyone famous in real life. My grandmother got mistaken for Nancy Regan a lot. And I've heard that Ronald Regan was an actor, but I've never seen any of his films. His memory went too, hu.

(END FILM WITH PROJECTION OF ASTRONAUT, WHICH FADES OUT SLOWLY TO WHITE LIGHT.)

You know, I heard this quote one time, and it was about a house, but I think it still applies – this guy said, the thing it takes to make a house a home is not what you put in it or how long you live in it. It's a place where you feel comfortable daydreaming. That a house is a home not because it holds your stuff but because it holds your dreams, not what you have but the things you've put out into the air and lost to time or forgetting or a missed moment or whatever. If that's how a house functions as a home, then does a stage function as a theater only when it serves as a shell to project these narratives, dream landscapes and worlds into? Is humanity then about what we have lost instead of what we've held onto?

(Film ends, projecting only white light on screen.)

What does it feel like to live in your dreams all the time?

My grandmother, the one that looked like Nancy Regan, she passed away suddenly after a long fought where she had trouble distinguishing between hallucination and reality. It was difficult for her to remember who she was, where she was and how old she was. We kept having to tell her not only who she was but who we were. Sometimes after the fourth or fifth time of reminding her who I was, I would stay silent when she would talk to me as if I was my mom, or her sister. I would let her think I was whoever she wanted me to be. If this theater is a space for dreaming, the people on that screen can be anything to anyone. Anyone can be a mother or sister or lover. But who are they really?

We should get ready. Our dressing rooms are this way.

(TOUR GUIDE enters from Stage Right, pauses in front of the movie screen, and gestures audience towards the hallway door stage left.)

TOUR GUIDE: Hello? Where are you? Oh, ok, I see – I thought I'd lost you for a minute. Can we all keep moving? You know, I'm sorry, this...this isn't the usual film we play on these tours. There is another film that the interns made, and I don't know where that one is... *(looks up at the projection booth)* I wasn't aware that the theater was being used by anyone else today. (pause.)

Well, um, we usually take the tours this way (*gesturing left*) but I think that other group is in there, if they're using the projection booth – let's see, why don't we try going this way (*gesturing to the right*). Yes, I bet we can go this way and just pick up the tour once we get towards the back of the building. Ok, so if everyone can just move through the doorway to your right here, that's great, and we will meet right outside this door. Great.

Part 3 – Dressing Rooms

(The TOUR GUIDE leads the tour from the main theater into the back hallway. She pauses to resume the tour.)

TOUR GUIDE Now that we are all together again here, let's continue...Um, well, this area is a little different. Um, ok, so... In the 1950's and 60's there was a renovation done on the building, and this hallway here is where you can see some of the work details. Um, you can see here, this wall maybe...this archway you may recognize from....um, oh...I think this was where...(*looks at audience, disoriented*) I'm sorry, this space is different from the other side, and I don't really know... I think I forgot what I'm supposed to say here. (*Looking around, muttering to herself, after a beat, frustrated, she resumes.*) But I do know – I KNOW – that in the 50's – sometime around then - The Michigan Theater was renovated. Yes, it was renovated – (*tour picks up again, begins to move toward the back stairs, to the dressing rooms*) ok, here we are, renovated in the 1950's and 60's, which was a time when television really became popular and film audiences began to decline. In an attempt to “modernize” the Theater, bringing it up to date with a fresh face and new look, the Butterfield Theater Company, the owners of the theater, decided to make some changes to the façade and interior design. (*Audience moves up stairs, TOUR GUIDE gesturing to details that don't exist, her pauses increasing as she tries to get oriented.*) They covered the plaster work with aluminum, put in a false ceiling. The façade was covered with steel and glass, which made the front of the theater look like a bank of modern mirrors, like those that you see in the displays in department stores or car dealerships. (*Audience reaches dressing room door. TOUR GUIDE pauses in front of it, gets her bearings.*) Here's the door to our dressing rooms. Let's go backstage.

(TOUR GUIDE goes into dressing rooms, freezing as AUDIO TRACK 2 begins, then moving through dressing rooms slowly, so slowly that her walkthrough should take the entire duration of this act. She touches dressing tables, walls, confused, in her own world as audio track plays over the dressing room intercom speakers.)

AUDIO TRACK 2: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) My grandfather is now the one who has trouble going

between reality and unreality. Since my grandmother passed away, he gets confused about when things happened. He remembers voices, but can't place people's faces, can't put a picture to his memories of things. I think about his work on the radio, about the world moving from radio to silent films to "talkies", and I wonder— where does my grandfather's voice belong if there's no image associated with it?

You can use any dressing table you want. Go ahead, sit down. Take your time, we still have a few minutes until places.

(Tour audience sits or stands in front of a bank of dressing room mirrors.)

AUDIO TRACK 2: (TOUR GUDIE voice over) This light is nice here, right? It's nice to look at yourself in the most flattering light, it makes whatever imperfections you see in that mirror somehow a little gentler, they don't stick out as much. I don't see the gray hairs unless I really look for them. I don't see the beginnings of wrinkles unless I tilt my head a certain way. The reality that I am growing old is easier to ignore – in a way it makes me feel like a movie star, like I am ageless. As long as I can still *look* the way I did when I was 5 years, 10 years, 15 years younger, I can still be that age.

When I got my first grey hair, I called my mom and told her. She said "How do you think that makes ME feel?" Like signs that I was aging were also proof that she was growing old, guilt by association. But I've always thought my mom was really pretty. In the past few years, I have noticed that she's changed physically as she's gotten older. She's gotten smaller – or maybe I've gotten taller, bigger. Also recently I've noticed that she has this one tooth in the front of her mouth that's gone sort of bad. You can't really see it, except when the light hits it a certain way. My mom came to visit recently and at one point I found myself embarrassed that my friends would notice her tooth. It's the first physical flaw I've found in her appearance. I wonder what physical flaws she finds in my appearance.

The last time I saw my grandmother, my grandfather and I were trying to get her to have dinner with us, trying to convince her to go out somewhere, to a nice restaurant. She offered to lend me some of her clothes, something appropriate for an upscale place, then stated "well, your hips are a lot bigger than mine", then, trying to soften it, she looked at me and said "you're really more of a hippy than me – don't you think? Aren't

you more of a hippy than me?” And I believed that I was.

I wonder how much of what we see in the mirror is what’s real and how much of our view of ourselves is made up of what others tell us we are.

(TOUR GUIDE slowly discovers a leftover lipstick, begins to put it on.)

The last time I tried to wear this dress, I wound up being too busy working instead of having the time to go out. That day I worked so long that my shoulder and neck began to hurt, I was in pain so intense that I couldn’t move the left side of my body. I went to the doctor, who told me to work less. But I used to be able to work all day and night, I replied. I was so frustrated – my physical body was not working the way it used to.

No matter what I look like in the mirror right now, no matter if I can still wear the clothes I wore to prom, no matter if my mom is still the prettiest woman in the world, it doesn’t change the fact that I’m getting older. Even if I don’t want to admit it. Even if my mom doesn’t want to admit it. That doesn’t stop time from moving onward. That desire to be immortal doesn’t stop anything. It just keeps us from looking forward all the time, it keeps returning our gaze to the past.

When the Butterfield Theater Company tried to modernize the Michigan Theater, the final “modern” redesigns ended up looking so horrible that they eventually went back to the theater’s original façade. I suppose most people want to look the same forever too.

When I was little I used to have a lot of panic attacks. The first one happened right after my team won the championship basketball tournament when I was ten years old. That day the sun was shining so brightly, I had that bright trophy in my arms, I was so happy and I thought “I wish this moment would last forever.” And I realized that it will all end.

(TOUR GUIDE notices tour audience looking at her in the mirrors, smearing her lipstick in the process. She attempts to wipe it off, regaining control, and moves to resume the tour.)

We are unable to grab those moments and to hold onto them, if even just for a few minutes longer. When I was young, I wanted everything to hold still, I wanted to stay in that moment, to hold onto it as long as I could.

But those moments are translucent, intangible. Like light and air. Like the silver screen –three-D worlds on a flat wall. Like memories. Like life itself.

(TOUR GUIDE pauses in doorway between the dressing rooms and back hallway.)

TOUR GUIDE: Um...I'm not sure...where were we...where we are in the tour right now. *(waits for audience.)* Does anyone have to go to the bathroom? I really can't talk about this space. Can we go back toward the main theater? I could tell you more about that...it's a really nice space...Yes, that's it. Lets all move this way. This way please. I think it's this way... *(Begins walking down stairway. Pauses, doubles back as AUDIO TRACK 3 plays.)*

AUDIO TRACK 3: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) When I had those panic attacks, the fear was about a loss of control. I wanted so desperately to hold on to those moments of our lives where we feel fulfilled, successful, invincible. Immortal. And I can't. There is no pause button, no rewind.

Those panic attacks plagued me for years. It was like I was mourning the passage of time before it had passed.

(The tour moves into the basement.)

TOUR GUIDE: This hallway...have you already seen this? Oh, maybe this is the end, Maybe this is where I am supposed to end the tour...?

AUDIO TRACK 4: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) Is that what it means to be able to replay those movies again and again, is the ability to recreate those times, those worlds, reinforcing our desire, our belief in, immortality?

TOUR GUIDE: (again, doubling back) Um, I think the exit is this way...

AUDIO TRACK 5: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) When I was little my mother would read to stories to me before I went to bed, as her mother had read stories to her - but after the light was out I would always stay up and keep reading, by myself. It was dark, but not dark enough that I couldn't make out the words and pictures if I squinted my eyes hard enough.

(TOUR GUIDE leads the audience backstage and disappears while the same film from earlier in the show plays on the projection screen, this time in reverse.)

Part 4 – Backstage

(The tour audience watches the film from the opposite side of the projection curtain. The TOUR GUIDE stumbles around the space, looking fro the exit, before moving to each backstage light and turning them off. This should take the duration of the entire act.)

AUDIO TRACK 5: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) I wear glasses now. I don't know if that's because of

the straining I did to see/read/get these stories alone, by myself, to keep me company in the dark. Or if my eyes were just bad anyway.

We cannot escape the limitations of our physical bodies, but in this theater we can relive the bodies of others. We may age but this space stays the same. Moving through the body of this theater, coming to this backstage area, to this skull of the building, we can now look out on the world through the eyes of the images projected here. We return the gaze of the thousands of viewers who look upon us, and together we form a collective memory, an image of what we have seen. This is a world that exists somewhere between reality and dream, it is a world that, as viewers we will take pieces of it with us when we leave this theater and it will color how we see the world around us. Will we see people, places and things differently because of the images we have seen here, places we want to go to but that do not exist?

If a home provides not shelter, but a space to dream, and part of the human condition is not what we do, but what we lose – the largest thing we produce as humans during our lifetimes is emotion. We give it off like carbon dioxide, emotions color what we say, what we do, our every decision, it is these emotions that make us human. And it is these emotions that are ephemeral, lost in the air.

I think about all the things I've lost during my lifetime – keys, clothes, money, friends, time. And in the end, we lose our lives.

But without that loss, those moments that we want to hold still, they would mean nothing. It is the fact that they go unrecorded, unreported, that makes them precious.

When I was young, I mourned the passing of time before it passed, when I realized that I am mortal. But to extend our lives, to make ourselves immortal, to want to live forever in the ageless silver screen, is to cheat being human.

If these images, this theater, should return our gaze, it must look outside of itself – for without us, without our lives, our bodies, bringing our time and emotions with us, there are no stories. No epics, no tales of heroism, no love stories. We create these stories. This space, this theater, only acts as a mirror.

(On the projection screen, images of the tour audience shot earlier in the tour are faded in to the images of historic film clips.)

AUDIO TRACK 5: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) It's good to look in the mirror, to see ourselves and

wonder how others might see us. To look into the past. But we cannot forget to take the stage.

Beginning this tour as inhabitants of this space, once our images are projected onscreen what do we become? If we were ourselves then, who are we now?

We are all movie stars.

It is our arrival and departure, our entrances and exits, that informs this theater what the stories will be, and what it should look forward to.

(TOUR GUIDE opens the exit door, and gazes at the outside world, her back to the audience.)

AUDIO TRACK 5: (TOUR GUIDE voice over) So as we exit, we don't leave the story behind us – we move onward, outward, in order to create more narratives, to have more stories to tell. We look forward, and begin to make the future our present.

We should go, the show is starting now. You can exit to the door on your left.

Thanks – and enjoy the show.

(The TOUR GUIDE walks out of the theater, the audience exiting after her. The End.)

Appendix 2: DVD of final performance documentation (attached)