

Towards a Synaesthetic Transparency:
Janet Cardiff's *Her Long Black Hair* as a Walk Between Acoustic, Temporal and
Ontological Spaces

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Janet Cardiff, Camouflage Arts and Transparency

Janet Cardiff is a Canadian sound and installation artist well known for her audio "walks." Since 1991, Cardiff has been producing these site-specific works in which participants are given a portable CD player with a pre-recorded soundtrack, stereo headphones, and told to press play when standing at a specific spot. After beginning, one hears Cardiff's voice giving directions, such as "turn right here" or "go under the stone bridge in the distance." These performative instructions are intermixed with a fictional narrative and layered on a background of sounds, all pre-recorded at the same location as they are heard through the headphones during the walk. In this way, the soundscape mimics the immediate, physical environment, and participants are immersed in a hybrid world that blurs the distinctions between fact and fiction, real and virtual. Difficult to situate in traditional art historical genres, Cardiff's walks are best characterized as "physical cinema," where the show moves out the theater, the spectator is mobilized and the moving images become the landscape of the city itself.¹ Of Cardiff's many walks, *Her Long Black Hair* (2004), set in New York City's Central Park, is most paradigmatic and will serve as the basis for analyzing her work.

It is my argument that an understanding of Cardiff's work can be furthered by contextualizing her aesthetic strategies and affects within the historical discourse on

¹ The term "physical cinema" is taken from Mirjam Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2006): 14. This notion of "physical cinema" is also similar to Yve-Alain Bois's description of Richard Serra's *Clara Clara*, when he writes: "The abrupt but continuous succession of views is highly transitive, akin to a cinematic experience." (Yve-Alain Bois, "A picturesque stroll around Clara-Clara," *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 52).

camouflage and "transparency" in the spatial and visual arts. Like the avant-garde artists of the early 20th century who created sensations of simultaneously overlapping times, perspectives, and spaces, Cardiff uses the manipulation of figure-ground and the sensorium to draw out and sustain the contradictions between fact and fiction in our everyday lives. In this way, Cardiff can be understood as both an "artist" and a "camoufleur." In his book *Art and Camouflage*, Roy R. Behrens writes, "The artist makes 'something unreal recognizable' while the camoufleur makes 'something real unrecognizable.' Although they share techniques, the intentions of the artist and the camoufleur are at opposing poles—the former reveals, the latter conceals—but as the Cubists' paintings show, the end results may be the same."² Cardiff's walks, and especially *Her Long Black Hair*, operate from both of these poles, making the invisible fantasies of our cities visible, while at the same time calling into question the transparency of what we see.

The concept of transparency has always been closely linked to inquiries into the dynamics of the human sensorium, as well as the interaction between art and technology, and these are also two crucial dimensions of Cardiff's walks. Deployed during the of the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s and in historiography of the period since, the term transparency has helped describe such a range of phenomena as the simultaneous and overlapping planes of perspective in Cubist paintings; the creation of new perceptual space through light in Moholy-Nagy's mechanical design experiments and films; the

² Roy R. Behrens, "Camouflage, Art and Gestalt," *Art & Camouflage: Concealment and Deception in Nature, Art, and War*, Cedar Falls: Univ of Northern Iowa (1982): 14.

interpenetration of spaces in Le Corbusier's villas; or the depth of vision and perceptual flux generated by Gropius's Bauhaus. These notions of transparency were closely tied to a new understanding of space that broke with Renaissance tradition and introduced time as a critical fourth dimension. This new idea of space-time also coincided with the conception of a new mobile and sentient spectator, physically and intellectually active in the creation of meaning in the built environment. However, these contours of the discursive history of transparency have been largely obscured in today's architectural discourse.

In 1964, Colin Rowe and Robert Slutsky published the now well-known essay "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal." The two authors based their argument for a new architectural practice on their interpretation of a key paragraph in György Képes's 1944 *Language of Vision*, in which he wrote:

"If one sees two or more figures partly overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlapped part, then one is confronted with a contradiction of spatial dimensions. To resolve this contradiction, one must assume the presence of a new optic quality. The figures are endowed with transparency: that is, they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. [Transparency] however, implies more than an optical characteristic; it implies a broader spatial order.

Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer, now as the further

one."³

Despite the spatial flux implied by Képes's conception of transparency, it is effectively a painterly idea. It is only three-dimensional as optical illusion, not as lived space. Furthermore, in no way does he account for the fourth dimension, so crucial to Sigfried Giedion and others. Rowe and Slutsky basically adopted Képes's theory, renaming it phenomenal transparency, to re-interpret Le Corbusier's Villa Stein in Garches (1926). They read the garden façade in terms of a constant flux of figure and ground, a continuous layering and shifting of spatial planes, whereby the viewer cannot determine what is in front and what is behind. Rowe and Slutsky, on the other hand, identified literal transparency with Giedion's two-page spread in *Space, Time, and Architecture* (1941) in which he described both Picasso's Cubist painting *L'Arlesienne* (1912) and the layered glass curtain wall of the workshop wing of Gropius's Bauhaus building (1925-26) in terms of transparency. The result of Rowe and Slutsky's intervention was the launching of a formalist paradigm, based upon the assumption of an architectural spectatorship akin to painting, that focused modern architecture almost exclusively on creating pattern effects, effectively treating building façades as large-scale canvases. While this proved highly productive for a period, and provided a springboard for much of Peter Eisenman's experiments in conceptual transparency, Rowe and Slutsky's reductive reading of the avant-garde has had stark consequences for architectural discourse.⁴

³ Quoted in Colin Rowe and Robert Slutsky, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal Part I," In *The Light Construction Reader*, ed. Todd Gannon (New York: Monacelli Press, 1992): 92.

⁴ This argument is a summary of Eve Blau's from "Transparency and The Irreconcilable Contradiction of Modernity," *PRAXIS 9* (Fall 2007): 50-51.

As Rosemary Haag Bletter, Detlef Mertins, and Eve Blau have shown, the distinction between literal and phenomenal transparency was founded on "a fundamental and, it would seem strategic misreading of the avant-garde conception of transparency in the 1920s and 1930s."⁵ Gidieon, Moholy-Nagy, Mies and others from the period had a far more developed theory of transparency than that described by Rowe and Slutsky, one which accounted for time as an active force in spatial creation and the movements of the spectator as integrally related to a building's form. Despite these recent historical reevaluations, Rowe and Slutsky's definitions, and especially the concept of phenomenal transparency, continue to define the terms of the architectural discourse on transparency, including its most recent incarnations as "light construction," "deep surface," and "translucency."⁶

A more productive conception of transparency is suggested by Blau, who identifies the term's theoretical value in its engagement with architecture's irreconcilable contradictions "between objective and subjective modes of cognition, between different systems of organization and structure, perception and knowledge, material and virtual presence" and the relationship "between the architectural object and the equally dynamic and mutable physical and social environments in which it operates."⁷ In this sense, transparency has served as a conceptual tool that holds these contradictions together in opposition to the dominant line of Western thinking that insists on drawing them apart. While Cardiff never explicitly defines her work in terms of transparency, she does see her

⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁷ Ibid., 50.

walks as constructing a "kind of cubist reality" through their mixing and overlapping of past and present, real and virtual.⁸ Cardiff's walks engage these contradictions without constructing binaries, pushing the spectator into a state of heightened awareness by situating them in a constant back and forth between multiple layers of space, time, and being.

By using transparency as an analytical tool, emphasizing its experimental contours in the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, we can begin to further move beyond Rowe and Slutsky's position and uncover the re-conception of space that Cardiff's work suggests. By creating overlapping and interpenetrating acoustic spaces, drawing out the layering of multiple times present in all places, and de-stabliziing individual subjectivity by blurring the boundaries between the self and the other, Cardiff's walks open the pathway to an expanded understanding of transparency that moves beyond surface effects to account for the sensorial, temporal and ontological complexity of lived space.

⁸ Janet Cardiff quoted in Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*: 99.

Multiple Layers of Transparency in *Her Long Black Hair*

All of Cardiff's walks are recorded in binaural audio, a technique that uses miniature microphones placed in the position of a person's ears. The result is an incredibly lifelike, spatialized reproduction of sound. Played back on a headset, it is almost as if the recorded events were taking place live. Beyond simply facilitating left and right channels like standard stereo audio, binaural audio allows sound to represent depth and movement. When you hear a bird fly by your left ear, you feel the bird approach, pass by your ear and then leave behind your head. The sensation is so true to your senses that your body tells you that this bird has surely just passed; however, your mind knows that this sound could very well be the recording and not the actual sounds of the space in that moment. When Cardiff first discovered binaural audio, she says she "had found a way to be in two different places at once. I was able to simulate space and time travel in a very simple way."⁹ As a listener, you are constantly suspended between your own action and Cardiff's creative control.¹⁰ Much like the viewer of a Cubist painting that must piece together the multiple perspectives of the image or an architectural spectator moving along a Corbusian promenade where a spectator is guided on a 'tour' and constantly making a synthesis of 'elective' images, as a listener in Cardiff's walks you ultimately complete the work through your own physical and mental actions.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., 4

¹⁰ This interpretation was aided by colleague Brian House in our co-written paper "Talking About Media, the City, and Human Subjectivity: A Retroactive Manifesto for a Critical Media Arts."

¹¹ *Architecture and Cubism*.

Cardiff begins *Her Long Black Hair* at Central Park's Sixth Avenue entrance with the proposition: "It's loud here isn't it. When you're in a city like New York, you have to think about the sounds like they are a symphony or you go a bit crazy."¹² Underneath short statement you hear a soft sound-bed of occasional honking horns, car alarms, and emergency vehicle sirens. Cars whiz by in your ears at the same pace as cars moving in regular traffic. Although being heard through the headphones, the soundscape is similar to what is taking place in the moment at this busy juncture of Midtown. At first, the real and the virtual mix almost imperceptibly. However, once Cardiff invokes the metaphor of the "symphony," the soundscape slowly begins to grow in pace, sonic density, and magnitude. The volume of different effects rises, and now its clear that the documentary recordings are being carefully edited to form a rhythmic crescendo. The horns, sirens, and alarms are treated like separate instruments in an orchestra. The composition is noticeably different from what is now actually happening on Sixth Avenue.

Cardiff is playing with the human intuition to look for visual signifiers of sounds one hears. The soundtrack that at first blended in with the immediate surroundings, now jumps out at you, creating a disjuncture between what you see and what you hear. As your eyes dart around the landscape in search of matching phenomena, carefully examining the details of your surroundings, the result is a heightened awareness of your visual and acoustic environment. This mini city symphony ends with the passing of a horse, the large animal's hooves tromping on the pavement from the right ear to the left

¹² Audio CD accompanying Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*. Track 15: 0:30 - 1:25.

and then out of the sonic frame. This is a main avenue for the park's famous horse-drawn carriages, and it's very possible that as a listener you will see a horse pass by in this moment. However, it is more likely that a horse does not pass at this precise time, and that the sounds will induce your imagination to project a horse onto the street. Cardiff is establishing what she calls "a third person, a third world, a mixture between listener and my voice."¹³ This progressive dissociation and re-association of the real and virtual city accentuates the overlapping sonic spaces in which you now reside as a participant in Cardiff's walk .

Cardiff introduces time as the next dimension of transparency. Whispering in your ear, she says, "I have some photographs to show you. Take out the first one. Number 1 it says on the top right. It was 1965. Almost 40 years ago. Line up the image with the scene in front of us. It's taken from where you're sitting now."¹⁴ As a listener, you take out a black and white picture from an envelope you have been given at the beginning of the walk. In the picture, you see a crowd of older men and women seated in chairs, watching what would appear to be a rally or ceremony. In the background, the photograph shows cars, caught in motion as they drive along Central Park South, in front of the façade of the same building at which you are staring. The image's vanishing point is a sliver of sky at the end of the 6th avenue skyscraper canyon, the same perspective you have from the place you are standing. In the picture, the columns framing the entrance and arches around the windows are grimy. From the vantage point of 2004, the building has been recently

¹³ Cardiff, in Schaub: 193.

¹⁴ Audio CD accompanying Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*. Track 15: 1:30 - 2:10.

refurbished, its façade meticulously sandblasted. While the your first intuition is to compare the photograph to the current day, Cardiff counters this by focusing your attention deeper into the image. She says, "The tree is in blossom. And the women's hats. They're all wearing them."¹⁵ Your eyes dart to the upper right of the photograph, examining the small buds lining the trees branches. You must look really closely to notice the bonnets that adorn so many of women's heads, a detail in this image that would easily be overlooked at first glance.

Simultaneously, you begin to hear the sound of a trombones and trumpets. Your first assumption is to look around. Maybe there is a parade today. Your eyes betray you. Where is this sound coming from? Looking carefully into the historic photograph, you see that there is a small brass band in the last row of spectators. Standing on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Central Park South, holding a Discman and a vintage photograph, you are caught between the sound and images of an event at this precise location in 1965 and the reality of the immediate physical environment. Whereas a traditional audio guide aims to transport a listener exclusively back in time, working to eliminate any sense of the present, Cardiff consciously works to place the listener in an in-between state, overlapping the past and the present, both visually and acoustically, emphasizing the temporal complexity of space, rejecting a static separation between history and an ever-changing present. As Mirjam Schaub points out, Cardiff's walks address the interrelationships of time, the real, and the virtual in a way similar to Leibniz's Crystal

¹⁵ Ibid.

Palace. She writes, ""For Leibniz, it is only by experiencing the unreal, by being suspended and separated from the world and experiencing the rupture of time, that the real world is revealed to us. In this sense, the virtual realm is constitutive of all that is real."¹⁶

Following this opening vignette, the walking begins. Cardiff says, "Get up. Go to the right. Try to walk to the sound of my footsteps so that we can stay together."¹⁷ Underneath Cardiff's voice, you hear the syncopated rhythm of footsteps. Although seemingly mundane, this sonic detail enables one of Cardiff's most dramatic effects. By inviting you to merge with her virtual body, Cardiff is instigating yet another layer in her complex matrix of transparency. When you begin to breathe and walk in synch, the distinction between self and other is blurred.¹⁸ Throughout the walk, listeners shift between associating Cardiff's voice on the soundtrack with their own, individual voice in their head and the disembodied voice of the artist.

¹⁶ Schaub, 242.

¹⁷ Audio CD accompanying Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*. Track 15: 2:17 - 2:30.

¹⁸ I have been helped in this argument by curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's insights in "An Intimate Distance Riddled with Gaps: The Art of Janet Cardiff," in *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works, with Georges Bures Miller* (New York: P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 2002): 22.

The Performative City

Earlier, we noted that Cardiff's work can be understood as "physical cinema," and Cardiff acknowledges taking many cues from the history of film. Anthony Vidler, in tracing the history of architecture's relationship to film, identifies the period of German Expressionism as a crucial juncture. At this point, architecture stepped out of the background and became an active participant in the experience of the film. The most dramatic example is, of course, the radical stage sets for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920). Influenced by the anti-perspective of Cubist painting, the walls enclosing the narrative drama are "at once solid and transparent, fissured and veiled, camouflaged and endlessly disappearing, presented in a forced and distorted perspective that presses space both backward and forward, finally overwhelming the spectator's own space, incorporating it into the vortex of the whole movie."¹⁹ As Vidler writes, "No longer an inert background, architecture now participated in the very emotions of the film: the surroundings no longer surrounded but entered the experience as presence."²⁰ In this early stage in film history, architecture animated film on the set and inside the studio, not out on the streets of the real city. Soon, however, the actual landscape of the city became the focus for many documentary and avant-garde filmmakers.

One of the most fertile domains of experimentation was within the loose genre of "city symphony" films. This classification is most commonly associated with Walter

¹⁹ Anthony Vidler, "The Exposition of Space: Architecture and the Filmic Imaginary," *Assemblage 21* (August 1993): 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

Ruttmann's *Berlin — Symphony of a Metropolis* (1927), in which a hundreds of clips of documentary footage gathered from over a year of filming in the city is rhythmically montaged together in five "movements" that present a stunning visual portrait of the German capital from early morning to a fireworks show at night. Ruttmann's epic poem was just one of hundreds of films made in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, as well as the United States, South America and Asia that transformed the actuality of the city, including its architecture and its people, into the main performers and narrative agents of the film. In her insistence on activating the city itself as a stage, Cardiff's walks can be seen within this "family of relations."²¹

Cardiff spends months on location, working on each of her walks. One of the most important parts of the process is extensive observation of the spaces in which a piece takes place. This rigorous analysis of habitual activity is essential in allowing Cardiff to use the city as an active performer in her pieces. In *Her Long Black Hair*, after she has asked you to get up and begin walking in her footsteps, Cardiff says, "Walk past the statue. And then down the stairs...all the way to the bottom. There's a woman below talking on her cell phone."²² Like the sound of the horse in the opening sequence, Cardiff cannot be sure that a woman will be there. However, she knows this a frequent activity in the park and at this specific location. Shortly after you hear this prompt, as you are walking down the stairs, a swarm of people pass you in the soundtrack. Snippets of

²¹ I use this term in the sense suggested by Thomas Elsaesser when he writes: " This means considering the history of image and sound technologies as made up less of a family tree and more of "family relations"— belonging together, but neither causally or teleologically related to each other. (Thomas Elsaesser, "The New Film History as Media Archaeology," *Cinémas* 14 (2004): 93.)

²² Audio CD accompanying Schaub's *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*. Track 15: 2:30 - 2:57.

conversation pass over your ears from front to back. Then at the bottom, sure enough, we hear a woman chatting. From her tone, and the fact that you do not hear the responses to her questions, you know she is talking on a cell phone. Here, Cardiff has set up a situation where her narrative points not only to anticipated activity in the city, but to sounds and actors in the narrative itself, further de-stabilizing our ability to distinguish between the real world in front of our eyes, surrounding our body and the virtual world transpiring in the headphones. This inter-narrative reference is then up-ended. As you continue to walk, now facing The Pond, Cardiff directs your attention to other events that might be taking place at that moment in your vicinity: "There's a man on the bench reading the paper. Another person is taking a picture."²³ You look for visual cues to match the suggestions from the voice. In this case, you might actually see a man with a newspaper or a person taking a picture. Cardiff turns the performance over to the flux of the city. And if at this moment these activities are not happening, the balance shifts back to the dimension of your imagination and the narrative space of Cardiff's soundtrack.

This performative conception of the city has a strong lineage in the history of modern architecture. It is echoed in the city-building philosophy of Camillo Sitte, who understood the design of city streets, spaces, and buildings as an integrated artistic practice and in Otto Wagner's design of the Stadtbahn in turn-of-the-century Vienna.²⁴ Within the avant-garde of the 1920s and 30s, it is possibly Mies van der Rohe's buildings and their manipulation of transparency that share the most conceptual territory with

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Camillo Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986) and Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919-1934* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

Cardiff's walks. The photographs of Mies's Tugendhat house make clear that the design of the living spaces and architectural surfaces was created to produce a constant sensation of immanence, in which the building is constantly made present through changing light, vantage points, and importantly, acts of inhabitation. Through reflection and carefully orchestrated views, each space constantly folds and unfolds into another, all enacted through the daily routines of the house's occupants. This experimental conception of transparency makes architecture "durational, performative," directly engaged with the interplay between space and time.²⁵

Cardiff similarly imagines an active spectator and the construction of meaning through the interplay between moments of interpretation and everyday spatial practice. Cardiff is able to immerse listeners into a layered landscape, where both the immediate reality and her virtual narrative and soundscape are in constant dialog. As Daniela Zyman writes, "'Now' and 'here' dissipates and coalesces with multiple periods of times and places."²⁶ Like the architecture of Mies's Tugendhat house, the city's spaces and the depth of its times become immanent, revealed in the present moment as active performers.

²⁵ Blau, "Transparency and The Irreconcilable Contradiction of Modernity": 58.

²⁶ Daniela Zyman, "At the Edge of the Event Horizon," in *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book*, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2006: 12.

Synaesthetic Transparency and Autonomy

In the late 19th century, we begin to see the conception of abstract, modern space develop within German aesthetics. August Schmarsow, in his 1893 lecture and essay "The Essence of Architectural Creation," tied the art of creating space directly to the conception of a "corporeal, sentient human" subject and embodied experience.²⁷ Despite acknowledging that "the history of architecture is the history of the sense of space," Schmarsow, like most other modern thinkers, strongly privileged vision over the other senses.²⁸ Cardiff's experiments help to insist upon an experiential understanding of the term transparency that is co-dependent with its context. Her use of the sonic medium highlights the fundamentally intersensorial nature of urban experience, using sound to alter people's visual, olfactory, haptic, and gustatory sense of their environment.

Cardiff's *Her Long Black Hair* presents a deep layering and interpellation of the virtual and the real, and it also draws out the inherently synaesthetic reality of our perception. As Steven Connor writes, "The senses are multiply related; we rarely if ever apprehend the world through one sense alone. Indeed, under conditions in which any one sense predominates, closer inspection may disclose that the predominating sense is in fact being shadowed and interpreted by the other, apparently dormant senses. Indeed, we might enunciate a paradoxical principle: that the more we concentrate, or are concentrated upon one sense, the more likely it is that synaesthetic spillings and minglings may

²⁷ August Schmarsow, "The Essence of Architectural Creation," in *Empathy, Form, and Space*, eds. ,” H.F. Mallgrave and E. Ikonomidou (Santa Monica: Getty Center, 1994): 291.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

occur."²⁹ Cardiff focuses upon sound to enhance the listener's visual perception.

Additionally, at key moments throughout *Her Long Black Hair*, Cardiff carefully draws out the other senses. While you stand and observe The Pond, she asks you "to smell the air." One of the experiments she asks you to perform while standing on Central Park's Mall accentuates the haptic: "Put your finger in your mouth, now put the wet saliva on your cheek. It feels cold, bothersome, like a separate part of your face. See how long you can stand it there."³⁰ As you pass through the park, she points out food sellers such as the "hot dog cart" and the "peanut vendor" to evoke your sense of taste. It is Cardiff's varied approach to documentary material, used both to evoke real urban phenomena and embedded in a fictional narrative, that draws the listener's imagination and related senses into the intersensorial nature of urban space.

By focusing her creative practice on the instability of boundaries between the real world and her artistically created soundtrack, Cardiff's work also confronts the age-old modern debate about the autonomy of art and architecture. Already in the late 19th century, we start to see the dissociation of art from its environment, as Hildebrand argues "the work of art is a total, self-contained effect, a reality in its own right as opposed to nature."³¹ Cardiff suggests an alternative conception of art and architecture that is instead contingent, enacted by the dialectic between the city as a performing object and the actively perceiving subject. It is not surprising that the sonic medium in particular is

²⁹ Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching and Hearing" (2001): 1.

³⁰ Script re-printed in Schaub, 104:

³¹ Adolf Hildebrand, "Form and Effect," in *Empathy, Form, and Space*, eds. , H.F. Mallgrave and E. Ikonomidou (Santa Monica: Getty Center, 1994): 237.

particularly effective in this critique of autonomy. As Connor writes it is "the very principle of relativity that defines the acoustic, the insufficiency that makes it impossible for the acoustic to stand alone."³²

Reading Cardiff's walks, in particular *Her Long Black Hair*, through the framework of transparency suggests the continued valence of this long-contested term within architectural and artistic discourse. Concerned primarily with vision historically, the term transparency is also a useful conceptual tool for interpreting aesthetic strategies operative on the other senses and in other fields of cultural production. Synaesthesia, understood as the aesthetic effects of the blending, overlapping, and interpenetration of the various senses, is fundamentally "transparent." By refusing to separate modernity's irreconcilable contradictions, but instead offering a theory for sustaining contradiction, transparency provides a unique approach to works insistent upon exploiting in-between states, mixed realities, overlapping temporalities, and synaesthetic affects.

³² Steven Connor, "The Modern Auditory I," in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1997): 220.

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