



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

OBSERVATIONS

- OBSERVATIONS -

by

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Thesis for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts with specialization in Digital Media

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Summary

This is a masters thesis paper, written by Giorgos Chloros, in May 2010, for the degree of master in fine arts with specialization in digital media. In this paper I write about my background, my artistic and work process and methodology. I also try to describe my personal way of thinking. I refer to other artists and artworks that have been very important for my artistic progress. I explain the whole process of creating the video installation “Videoportraits 1” as my masters project. In the end I try to see the work from a neutral point of view, criticize it and see how I should proceed in the future.

Keywords: waiting, metal processes, observance, public filming, installation, video installation, fine arts,

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1. Introduction

In this paper I am not going to pretend that I am a good writer, simply because I don't consider myself a good one. I will try to make the line that connects my "keyframes" stronger. To let you know, and in order to put you in my context I will write about my past, my interests, my way of working and my influences. I will write about my thoughts and my way of thinking. I will try to explain - even to myself - why and how I ended up doing what I am doing. Based on my own interpretation of the following quotation, this paper is not going to be more personal than universal.

A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.¹

- Albert Einstein, 1954 -

¹HINDE R. *Ending War*. Spokesman Books; 2008. p.40 [1]

Part I.

What I am dealing with

2. A brief story about my past

Having a background of five years study in a fine art school, I have dealt with traditional and other forms of art. Having theoretical classes and asking every day the conceptual “why”, I tried to fill each work with theoretical content. This was a truly exciting, pleasant and of course an educational process. After a couple of years of traditional art practice I thought that sculpture was my way to go. Then I found photography and in a few years I gained a sound knowledge in this field. However, my ideas were always filtered through aspects of time, space and scale, that I mainly got from sculpture.

Before, if I had something in my mind I had to paint it or generally make it. I needed to bring something to life even if it only existed as an idea. Somehow it felt fulfilling to be able to take a nice picture of something or somebody. Then, using photography, it felt nice to capture a moment, an expression, a feeling or an idea. I felt that what I really could do was to observe things, to observe life. Bringing the content into a different context in order to question it, has been my understanding of art and what I could and wanted to do.

I somehow became more interested in the processes and time based topics which I could see or create, so there was a need to include the aspect of time in my work. The 1/60th of a second in a still picture was not enough to get across what I wanted to describe. Soon, my main interest was moving more and more towards video and moving images in general. Time was just a vital part of what I had in my mind and what I could think of. My sculptural background is what always made me think in terms of space and scale, so those aspects became the most vital part in the process of getting ideas. I thought about the space that was going to be captured in the camera, the space that would be presented and the relationship between those two spaces. I also had to think as a viewer in-between those two spaces.

I could clearly see the ideas in my mind. But at any point everything could totally change, depending on the way it was presented. I had to make conscious choices in setting everything up and why. I was thinking that painters final work is not their ideas and rough sketches but the actual painting. The finished painting includes the whole process from the beginning until the last brushstroke. The only difference I could see when I

2. *A brief story about my past*

compared myself with a painter was that my last brushstroke would be the adjustment of the projector's focus or the sound level of one of the sources.

In my full body of work I can clearly see major references to the American video artist Bill Viola. Bill Viola's work has been inspiring me since the beginning of my art practice. The human figure is always a fundamental part of his work. He films human relations, reactions, behaviors and personalities. His works concerns topics from everyday life, and of course he questions life and death.



Figure 2.0.1.: *Bill Viola, The Space Between the Teeth (1976), Video still*

Bill Viola is definitely not an innovative artist, in the sense he does not deal with matters that none have ever done before; but he has innovative ways to present them. He is elevating everything by his way of seeing things and presenting them. In works such as the *Bodies of Light* and *The Quintet of the Astonished*, he is filming with high-speed cameras very quick actions, such as people walking and passing through a layer of water, or a group of people expressing their feelings about something they see. The real duration of those simple actions is about a few seconds, but he is extending their

2. A brief story about my past



Figure 2.0.2.: Bill Viola, *Bodies of Light* (2006), Installation view

duration to fifteen minutes. When the viewers come in front of those supernatural videos, then they have the time to adapt to the artist's point of view. He is an artist who uses the highest technology available. With his phrase "*All works of art, though visible, represent invisible things*", in combination with his perfection concerning the image, and the fact that his techniques have been characterized as "Hollywood-like", brought me many questions about how important the image is since I am also using it as a pretext.

In 2007 and 2008 I focused on my bachelor final project which was a large video installation titled *ireallydontknow*. *ireallydontknow* consisted of four works. The thing in common between those works was the human figure in the space. I started by filming myself and making self-videoportraits. I didn't know how would these portraits come out. The first intention was just to spend time in front of the camera and start talking, something like an auto-interview. This thing never happened; not because I was feeling uncomfortable, but just because I didn't feel like talking. I was never familiar with talking to myself out loud, so I couldn't do that in front of the camera either. What I did, was basically looking deep inside the lens of the camera. My look was very deep and almost lost in an empty space. When I watched the videos, I couldn't really recognize myself

2. *A brief story about my past*

and I couldn't recall the moment that I was doing that. This became a very interesting relationship between me and myself, so I worked more on that, until I had the final videos that I wanted for the installation. I wanted to experiment also with others. I wanted to see how they feel in front of a camera and what do they do. So I started working with friends. I put twelve of them individually in a room with a camera recording. Their task was to stay for an hour and they were free to do what ever they wanted. Most of them after some point started talking. They did exactly what I couldn't. There was something deep there.

When I started working on my ideas, I didn't really know what exactly I was doing, why I was doing it or what I was looking for. After everything was done, I could clearly see that I had some topics. I was dealing with the emptiness of moments, reality and non reality, observance and the body in the space. One thing I know now is that this was a very promising starting point for myself.

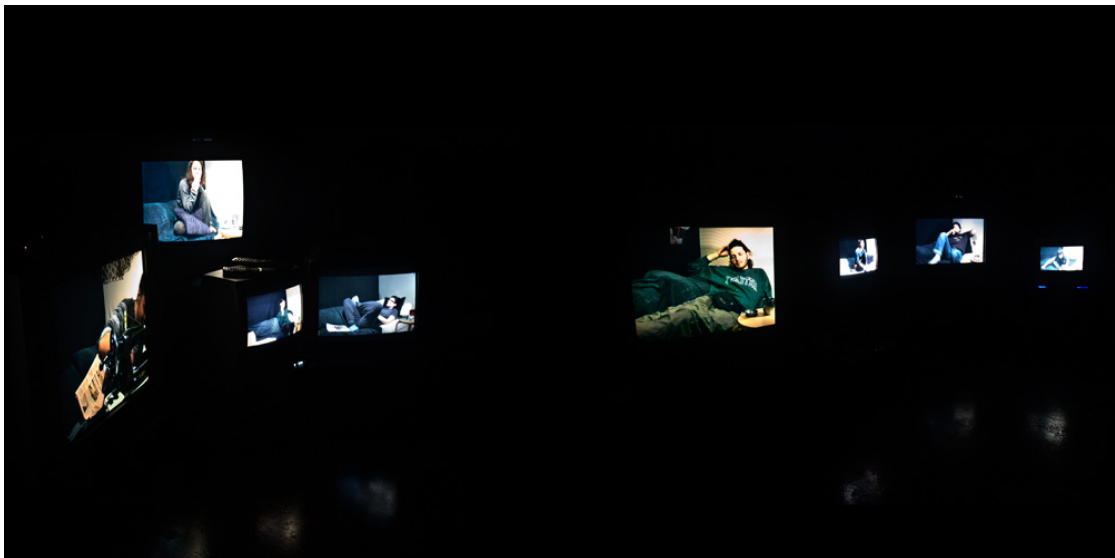


Figure 2.0.3.: *Giorgos Chloros, Confessions (2007), Installation View*

At some point I felt that in order to express what I wanted to express I needed to master my medium; to learn every aspect of it and make creative usage of my tools. I had to find ways to not be distracted by the extensive process which is an integral part of the medium. In order to be creative and true to what I wanted to do, I had to change my whole way of thinking in terms of my medium and make it an extension of my mind.

Soon, because of my sculptural and photographic background, I could see myself getting better and better and being able to accomplish my goals easier. But then when it

2. *A brief story about my past*

was about even simple things; things such as synchronizing video projections, triggering things as a viewer; things got more complicated and difficult to achieve. I wanted to do everything on my own but found it quite difficult. I needed some more specific and technical focused education. I wanted to get the “know how”.

When I came to study in the C:Art:Media master program in Sweden I had no idea about “new technologies” and how could it be possible to control the environment of an installation without using very expensive equipment or sacrificing a whole life in front of a computer to learn a new coding language.

The studies started and everything new I was learning was exciting. Things were much simpler than I thought they would be. Although the time I had from when I had an idea until the time the actual work was done was growing bigger and bigger. I did a couple of collaborative works with my partner Anastasia Melekou (a really interesting process) during which I gained sound knowledge on interactive installations. Almost everything I could think of, I could now do, although I caught myself many times thinking only in terms of technology and how to create “cool” installations. There was no concept in my mind. I felt I was caught in the trap of technology and excitement. I couldn’t really find any point in what I wanted to do. The technological part of me was just growing bigger and was pushing aside my content. I couldn’t figure out what my concept was anymore. It felt that my medium was becoming my content.

3. Where is my mind?

Finally, we live in a world where people are doing something: building houses, having children, developing cities and so on. So you often wonder: what the hell am I doing? If you are doing art, then you are doing something that is ancient, so you are safe. But if you are not doing art, because you don't know what kind of art you have to do, because you did some things in the past and now you have to find another way to create and so on, then you are in a horrible situation. At the same time that you are looking for something to inspire you, you have to face the fact that you are not producing anything. Just by thinking and waiting, you are not doing anything essential. The part of your brain that tells you that all the time you have to do something, now it says that you are not doing anything. At the same time, there is also the other part that says; 'Hey, there is no problem about thinking, it is very important'. But this is somehow dangerous, because you don't know for how long you can be thinking; one week, one month, two months, three, half a year, two years - for how long can you only be thinking?¹

- Lucas Samaras -

These last two years of my life I have spent really lots of time doing nothing. Doing nothing? I cannot really accept that it is true. I must have been doing something, quite a lot actually, but it felt a lot like a very passive period, getting information, loads of information, and different and interesting input.

Living in a different environment from what I was accustomed to is very ... disorienting. It was very much a turning point in my life. I had time to think about everything in a different context in a way much different that I would do back home. Although I had been around so many interesting people, having so many interesting conversations, being part of nice events ... it felt that there was only one person I could really speak to and be a hundred percent understandable. My partner. I could speak freely without having

¹KOSKINIA K, EDITOR. *Lucas Samaras*. The J.F. Kostopoulos Foundation; 2005. p.218
(my translation from greek) [2]

3. *Where is my mind?*

to explain every single word that I was saying and explain my purposes. I don't know if that was only about speaking the same language, or having the same reference points or the same background, even if the background was personal, cultural, or educational. I really have not figured that out yet. But this is not my point. My point is that after some time I really did not have so many things to talk about. Everything was already fixed or discussed. I don't refer here to things everyday life that one must talk about, but maybe about deeper thoughts.

I could spend many hours a day doing nothing but thinking. Thinking is probably good, but it is good when you know what you are thinking about. I was asked many times 'Hey, what are you thinking about?' or 'Where is your mind?'. Most of the time my response was 'I really don't know'. How could it be possible not to know what was I thinking about? This situation started making me a bit worried. Was that normal? I always knew that I was thinking about something important, but I didn't really know exactly what it was about. I was thinking about many things simultaneously. Many thoughts of many kinds together in my mind; it was making it hard to find the connecting line.

I started giving tasks to myself. One task was to try to keep track of what I was thinking of. Probably it sounds a bit funny, but this is the truth. After a point I interrupted the thinking process and tried to solve the knot; tried to see where I started from and in which way I managed to end up where I was at. That was a funny but weird process.

Now I really can say that this process worked out and made me a more concentrated person. At the least, I am not so often lost in a confusion of thoughts and I am more aware than before of what is happening in my own mind. It was a time that this process was becoming more productive, thoughts started getting in an order and started making sense.

It must have been November 2009, when I watched a documentary about Bruce Nauman's work and I got fascinated by his simplicity when talking about his piece *Mapping the studio 1*. He said that when he realized that there were some rats in his studio he decided to videotape his studio space during the night. Every morning he would return to the studio, sit on his chair, and play back the video which was shot the previous night. He watched the same space that he was in; but in the past, without anything happening. During this he was not really watching the image, but thinking more about the situation. I found this a very interesting point. Everything was there, questions about reality, moments of pure thinking, observing, relations between time and space, everything.

Bruce Nauman's work has been really inspiring for me. He is an artist that has used the camera, as a way to observe himself. He has been pushing himself to the limits in

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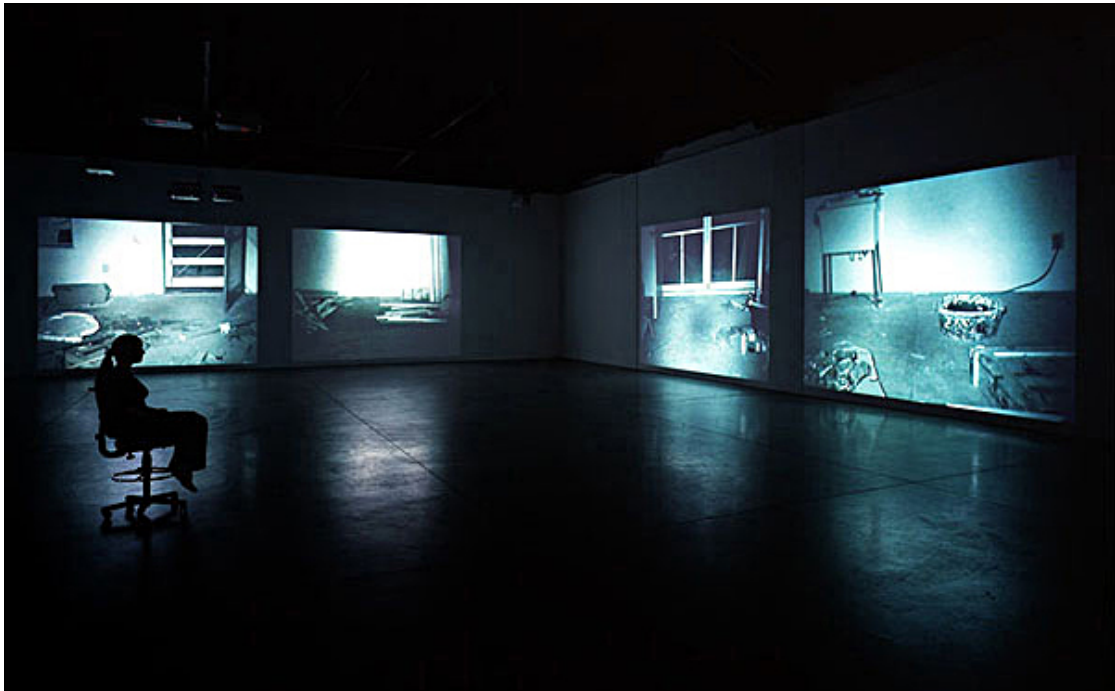


Figure 3.0.1.: *Bruce Nauman, Mapping the Studio 1 (2001), Installation view*

front of the camera. The human figure in relation to the space is a very strong aspect in most of his video works. Bruce Nauman is an artist that is not just stuck with the video, he has been experimenting and creating really important works with other forms of art, such as sculpture, light and sound installations. Being a conceptualist he is not using neither technical and cinematic gimmicks, nor fancy framing or special effects. His work is so simple and direct that puts the viewer in the correct position. The position they have to be in order to see his point of view. In order to think; to understand.

During this time I became more and more aware of the amount of time I was spending doing nothing, or thinking. It was maybe more than half of the time that I was awake. That also felt scary. Was that normal? I tried to see what other people were doing, I tried to compare my life with the lives of the others. I tried to see what the others were doing when they were alone. People taking breaks from their routine, people moving themselves from one place to another. People queuing up in banks, hospitals, stations, supermarkets and any kind of public place. And even more, "dead time" could be found while people sat on benches and did nothing. Well that can't be true, it can't just be "dead time". This must be some kind of thinking. Yes, I see it all around me. Thought must be very important for all of us. But how much are we aware of that? How much

3. *Where is my mind?*

do we want to do that?

On the other hand, if people look around they can see that people are not prepared to let themselves to be victims of doing nothing. They don't want to be victims of just thinking. So they are armed with mp3 players, cellphones with cool applications, any type of game devices, newspapers, stupid magazines, facebook mobile and whatever else might distract them from pure thinking.

These distractions were very interesting but I found more interesting the original subject of the "thinkers"; simply because this is what I do. I wanted to investigate that. I wanted to place myself between the others and see what is normal and what is not. These thoughts and consequences were the result of my realization that I was staring at other people and trying to get into their mind – trying to picture their thoughts by their image. Their public image that maybe they were not aware of, or was not intentional.

I also got strength to go on with something so simple as portraits by the works of the artist Fiona Tan. She is an Indonesian video artist who lives and works in the Netherlands. Portraiture is central to Fiona Tan's style of work, but she is mainly prefers to work with the moving image, than the photographic still. The usage of the moving image in her portrait works such as the *Provenance* and *Tomorrow* is simply powerful and such works really apply to Bruce Nauman's phrase '*the importance in any artwork is what it reveals and what it hides and the tension between the two*'.²She very well and simply describes the big difference between the still and moving image.

*So we tend to scan a photograph quite quickly at first just to figure out what we're looking at, and then maybe go back and spend more time after that. You do look at it differently than you look at a painting. But then looking at a moving image is a different engagement again because you're aware of time passing. You get a certain sense that the person who was filmed is actually looking at you – which is weird and of course you know it's not true.*³

Time passing. Once again, time ... time is everything. But what is our relation with time? How prepared are we to face time? How much time do we need? And finally how important is time for us? Those were the main questions that I had in my mind and wanted to work on. The fact that day by day I find more artists dealing with the same topics as I am, such as Fiona Tan, is what gives me the impetus to go on.

² Video-Interview: "Bruce Nauman". [3]

³ MORRISON A. *Fiona Tan finds hope in the faces of Tomorrow*. [4]

3. *Where is my mind?*



Figure 3.0.2.: *Fiona Tan, Tomorrow (2005), Installation view*



Figure 3.0.3.: *Fiona Tan, Provenance (2008), Video stills*

Part II.

Making the Videoportraits

4. Preparations and Implications

*There is something on people's faces when they don't know that they are being observed that never appears when they do. If they did not know how Walker Evans took his subway photographs (riding the New York subways for hundreds of hours, standing, with the lens of his camera peering between two buttons of his topcoat), it would be obvious from the pictures themselves that the seated passengers, although photographed close and frontally, didn't know that they were being photographed; their expressions are private ones, not those they would offer to the camera.*¹

- Susan Sontag -

By January 2010 I realized that I did not really have that much time to think more on what my final project was going to be about. I had created my ideas and I had a few projects in mind that could be done; but somehow I kept on self-canceling my ideas. I was in that loop where I had to think as an artist and then also change my point of view - and I was trying to be a very hard critic. From my point of view at that time, nothing was really fulfilling all the aspects that an artwork. Either it was too simple, or had way too much theory so it couldn't really balance well with the actual work, or it was too pretentious, or too catchy. In general it was a bad period for me to persuade my self that I should go on with something.

It was obvious that it was a dead end. It felt as trying to play chess against myself and expect to win. Obviously I had to push myself more towards my thoughts as an artist and persuade myself to just do it, or at least try it. For sure the best thing I had to do was to work on my ideas and just stop self-canceling myself. I had nothing to lose.

I was a bit fed up with studio work. The process of trying to direct everything before shooting, spending days in adjusting the lights trying to find a solution on how to do everything in the correct way so that my final result of the installation would be the one I had in my mind, was nice but in the end it really felt dishonest. Dishonest in the way that everyone was aware of the existence of the camera, so everyone was really acting.

¹SONTAG, S. *On Photography*. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1973. p.29 [5]

4. Preparations and Implications



Figure 4.0.1.: *Studio setup during the shootings of “Hear me now” in 2009*

I had in the past always been satisfied with the results of these types of projects, but I felt that I needed to do something real; film something absolutely natural.

I wanted to get my camera and go out in the real world to film real people. I wanted to film people being alone in public, people doing nothing. I wanted to gather portraits of people simply thinking. I wanted to film something honest, to film real personalities that are unaware of any camera and not pretending to be something other than what they really are.

Although filming people without their consent should not be the most legal thing and of course is not honest at all from my side. I knew that my idea was powerful and therefore very tempting. I had to do it. Because of my excitement I had not really been thinking about the legal aspects of it, but soon after discussing it in class the issue came up. I began thinking. Again.

The first argument that really naturally came to me was that before going out people make themselves up, after looking in the mirror they go out knowing that they are going to be seen by the public. We are also being filmed every day by the security cameras which of course are confirmed as legal by the system. People also seem to have accepted that, because they are still in public spaces, they don't seem to be annoyed by the fact

4. Preparations and Implications

that they are filmed. All that though is something that doesn't have any strong and formal base and might not be legally correct.

I definitely had to search for some "filming laws", to see if what I wanted to do was in fact against the law. The first result from google, when I searched for public filming law, was a forum that said the following:

Evening all,

Just been watching a video on Youtube: Youtube Video An interesting short film about the legality of taking photographs on the streets in the UK. There's a nice interaction between the photographer and a couple of Police Community Support Officers in Central London. And seeing the attitude of the PCSO in the video, i was rather disgusted with what he said to the guy filming. But seriously, under what law or act (if any) is there to stop someone filming or taking pictures in a public place? I know people may feel uncomfortable been filmed, the PCSO in this video as an example. What are your thought and opinions of this video? and people filming/taking pictures in public places?

- Brooky -

There's no law, film and photograph in public as much as you like.

- Darkness -

[...]

You are entitled to film in a public place, it is completely legal. It is only on private property that permission must be seeked.

- ChrisdTVP08 -

[...]

You can film on private property as far as I'm aware. You just can't use the photos for commercial purposes unless you have the prior permission. Personal photos are fine though.

- TCambs -

[...]

I was told: Any person can film in a public place (a place that anyone has access to 24/7 without having to pay or get consent to enter) But what about

4. Preparations and Implications

'Authority' paranoia over photography in London

urbanimage

8 videos

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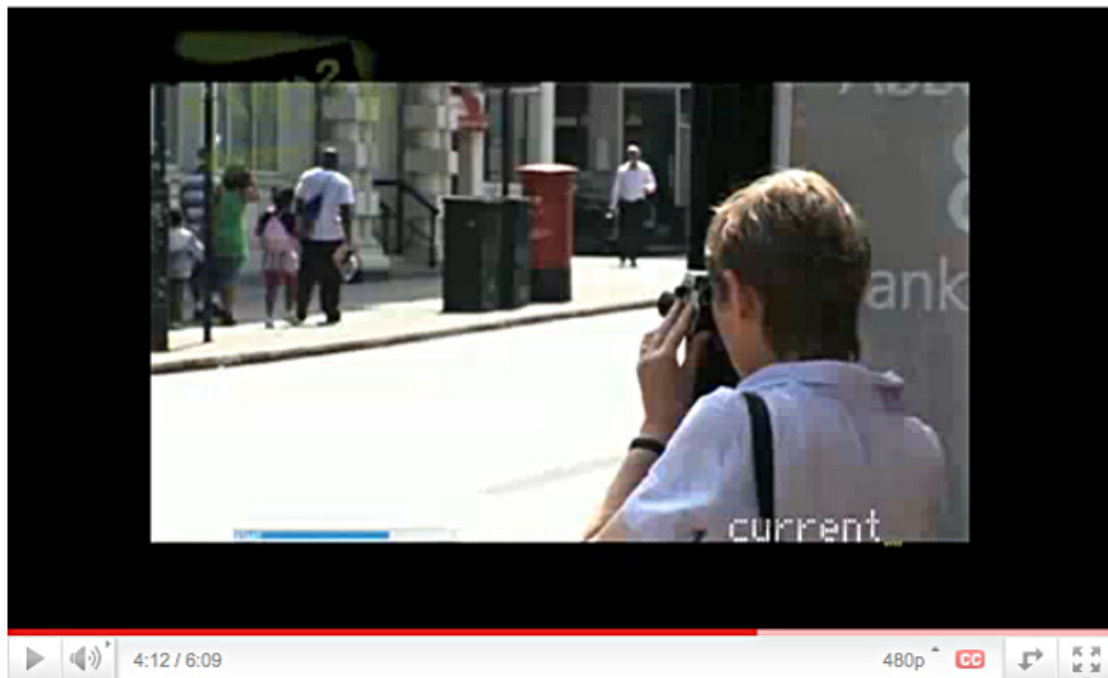


Figure 4.0.2.: 'Authority' paranoia over photography in London. Screenshot from the video that triggered the discussion in the forum.

parks? I have asked many people this and got different answers, the most legitimate sounding is below: A park is owned by the Council and therefore constitutes private property, but only if there are gates that can be locked and there are opening and closing times. You need permission to film in a park if the above are in place. Child protection comes into place if a person is filming an area where children or vulnerable people are or are likely to be. Any ideas? It sounds good but can it be substantiated.

- sc-essex -

[...]

There are some restrictions on commercial filming in certain parks... For instance Westminster Council will require someone that filming video in one of their parks for 'commercial' purposes to obtain a permit (£ pay a fee). If you're filming your kids playing football then it's not commercial and you're

4. Preparations and Implications

free to do it. I think this whole child protection issue means that people who try and prevent others filming their children in a public place are often skating on thin ice... I would suggest that a council or other body that owns a place to which the public have ready access would need to 'reserve the right of admission' on the basis that they could choose to restrict certain behaviors through use of Byelaws. In the end all of this is a civil matter anyhow.

- jonny42 - ²

It all seemed to be exactly what I had in mind, but still that was a discussion forum where photographers, journalists and common people were expressing their thoughts on that question. Filming and photographing people in public spaces seems to be a very important matter. It was hard to find a defining reply on it. More difficult though, was finding Swedish laws about filming, when almost everything on the net is about the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and generally about Europe. After 9/11 laws have changed and were changed due to the Antiterrorism law.

“Can Photography or Videotaping Activities be Prohibited?”

Although normal photographic activities should not cause problems in public forum areas, extreme or suspicious behavior could expose a photographer to prosecution under disorderly conduct and loitering laws. Disorderly conduct laws prohibit people from engaging in any behavior that causes substantial inconvenience, annoyance or alarm through disruptive behavior. For example, taking a few photographs of someone in a public place will not constitute disorderly conduct even if the person is annoyed. Extreme behavior, such as repeatedly taking close-ups despite someone's objections or failing to obey police orders at a crime scene could constitute disorderly conduct. ³

- Lawyers.com -

Searching for laws about filming in public ended up being a never ending process, since everything I found has blank spots and can be interpreted the way one wants to do it. So I decided to go on with the project, no matter what the legal aspects of it were and see what happens.

At one point I did send out some emails to a university lawyer and some other lawyers whose email addresses I found in some of the forums. Finally one lawyer from the

² *Filming in a public place - The Law. [6]*

³ *Videotaping and Photographs in Public. [7]*

4. Preparations and Implications

university of Gothenburg replied back and told me that there was no problem in doing what I was doing. She told me that filming people in public spaces is totally lawful even in Sweden. She also attached her interpretation of the law (below - in Swedish).

När man filmar eller fotograferar människor så kommer att man behandla personuppgifter i enlighet med personuppgiftslagen. Det är i princip bara tillåtet att behandla personuppgifter om man har samtycke från den vars personuppgifter som behandlas. I ett fall med ett videoklipp eller ett fotografi där det går att identifiera en person d.v.s. det är möjligt att koppla ihop en person med dennes personuppgifter som t.ex. namn – så utgör detta personuppgifter. Om videoklippen och fotografiet används för att uttrycka ett konstnärligt uttryck så gäller inte personuppgiftslagen d.v.s. den ”träder” åt sidan för yttrande- och tryckfriheten varvid det blir fritt att använda personuppgifterna på video- resp fotografiet.⁴

- Kristina Ullgren -

Finally it felt nice that I was totally covered by the law. I didn't have to be stressed anymore that someone would prosecute me. Although things are not clear. The wideness of the terms private and public, makes it hard to draw a clean dividing line between them, therefore is hard to make straight laws concerning private and public data. I believe that still, even with the existing law, a person that is sensitive to the extreme could easily lead me to the court, most likely claiming that I crossed the public limits and I entered some sort of private moment. For me, from an artistic and creative point of view, having an open spirit and being challenging, unlike sticking to technicalities and creating problem that shouldn't exist, is what we have to do in order to move on.

⁴Email from Kristina Ullgren on the 18th of May 2010.

5. Shooting the portraits

Since I am used to working with a plan and having the final result fixed in my mind ahead of time, I found it difficult to get out of that trap. Well, I don't find that bad or even restrictive. I wanted my image to look nice and clean, I wanted to have a more cinematic look, and I wanted it to be as detailed as possible. Since the project was going to be based on field shooting, I had to deal with my subject, the background and the foreground. In order to focus on my subjects I had to find a way to "get rid" of the surroundings, so I decided to do that by having a shallow depth of field. Having a shallow depth of field with consumer camcorders is almost impossible so I had to buy a 35mm adapter that could fit on my camcorder and then I had to attach a 35mm camera lens on it. Very soon I had collected all the equipment needed and I was waiting for a nice day to go out and start testing.

In March 2010 I went on a trip to Barcelona. The weather was great, everyone was out on the streets and the parks and I had been walking around the city carrying my equipment. Perfect timing to start working. All around I could see people "posing" for me. It was time to finally choose how I was going to film. I sat my equipment in a "safe" place and distance from people, usually between sixty to one hundred meters away, in places that were usually busy. I was looking for interesting figures, or I was framing an empty bench and I was waiting for a person to come and sit. It was a really pleasant process, but at the same time I felt really uncomfortable with what I was doing.

I felt like a pure observer. I could stare at real people through my lens. It was like I was next to or in front of them, but at the same time I was very far away so they were natural and I was not interrupting their special moment. While shooting I had the self-confirmation that this was what I was looking for, something that I could not direct, because by default it could not have been directed and it was so true and natural.

The first portraits that I shot were in a park where there was not that much traffic; not too many people were passing in front of my subject. Before started shooting I thought that the portraits should not be interrupted by people trespassing; but of course even from the first shot I realized that this was not going to happen so I began to use that in a creative way. It was something that I had to deal with later on during the editing.

5. *Shooting the portraits*



Figure 5.0.1.: *Me, filming in Barcelona*

After leaving Barcelona, I did some more shootings in Malmö and also In Göteborg. All the shots in Malmö were taken in a very busy central square and I wasn't really sure if I wanted to shoot in such a busy place with so many people in my frame. Despite this, I took my rig out and tried to see what came out of it. In the first moments of filming, I saw a really big difference in peoples behavior. I was interested in the contradiction between the people that I was filming and that rhythm of the city around them. It felt as they were trying to get a break from this rhythm which they are part of, but still they were not really relaxed and after some time with their self, they were again becoming part of the busy rhythm.

On the other hand, in Göteborg the location I chose to film in was the park Slottsskogen. A totally different place than the square in Malmö, because people were going there to relax, and by the time they were in the park they were already outside of the rhythm of the city and in a way not part of it. All the people that I chose to shoot in that location were really peaceful and calm and the whole image looks quite still.

6. Editing

In about mid-April I had already gathered around twenty portraits and I thought that it was about time to stop filming the first phase of the project, but go through the material that I had and start sorting it out and editing it.

My original intention for the installation of the final exhibition was to have a three channel video projection on three stand alone large-sized screens. These would create a wide u-shape space where the viewer would be able to walk around and be surrounded by those portraits. Feeling the pressure from the number and the scale of the screens, forcing the viewer to observe them and stare at them from a really close distance as in a new way.

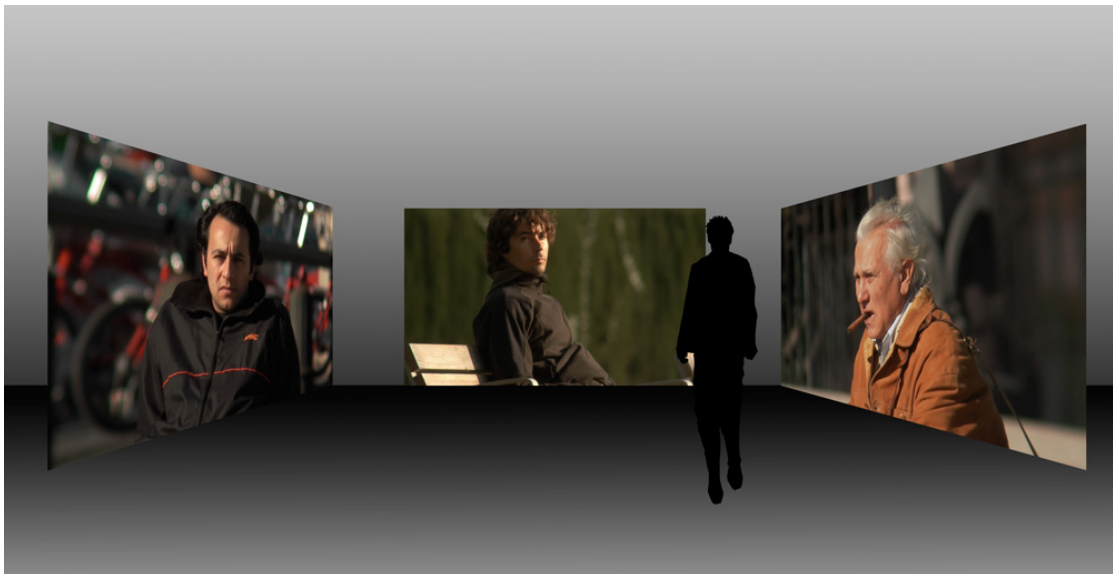


Figure 6.0.1.: *The first mockup for the three-channel Video installation.*

After some discussions with the curator, we figured out that the space was not really enough for what I wanted to do. The main option that I had was to minimize the scale, but that was something that I really did not want to do, since the scale has always been a fundamental part of my work. I could picture this installation either with really big

6. *Editing*

projections, or with tiny screens, where the viewer would have to observe the portraits from a certain place and the whole work should have been presented in a more sculptural way. The option of medium-sized projections seemed to be the most convenient way for the exhibition from the curator's point of view. I really believed that this simply would not work out. At that point I was not in the mood to work on the second option, simply because I had pictured it big in my mind. So the only option that I had if I wanted to keep the large scale was to make a single projection.

In my previous works, the way that I would edit my videos would be predefined and usually there was not really much editing needed, because I would shoot everything in a specific way, so that the footage would easily lead me to the desired result.

Before the final masters exhibition, the actual work *videoportraits 1* was just a sequence of portrait clips and nothing more. Because of the openness of the project, this was the time that I had to shape it up into a work that was ready to be exhibited. Depending on the space of the installation, the work would have been different in any case.

The case was the following: I had to install the work in a space about 4.3 meters wide by almost 15 meters long and of course it had to be a single projection. My first idea was to fill the projection wall with a 420 by 225 centimeters projection and just put a couple of benches about six meters away; in order to make the space more welcoming to the visitors so they could sit on the benches and be in more or less the same situation as the people in the video.

My thoughts about the editing were very simple. I wanted to make an infinite loop of one portrait following the other while having a nice rhythm and smooth transitions with no cuts in between videos. I wanted to use the people crossing the frame in front of the portraits and create some sort of swipe effect as transition between the clips.

I started going carefully through the footage and I figured out that for what I wanted to do I could not have used more than half of it, because neither the frames nor the atmosphere matched visually. Some were too short and others were a bit too shaky. Although the first sorting of clips was done in the field when I was shooting. I shot only the desired portraits, on the second level of sorting had to deal only with technicalities.

What I basically did after sorting the clips out, was to put the clips in a correct order depending on the place, the energy of each portrait, the colors, the level of movement and of course the possibilities for transitions that each one had.

The next step was creating the transitions between portraits. The way that I thought that was going to be the most seamless and fluid to do the transitions, was to export the last frames of each clip as photoshop images create masks that were going to be placed on top of each following video. This frame-by-frame process was quite time consuming,

6. *Editing*

but on the other hand it gave me a very pleasant result.

Once I was done with all the editing, I did some minor color correction and after the result was even and good looking, I went on to the very last step. After almost a week of editing I had to do the final rendering. Since I wanted the best quality possible, I did the final render using the most lose-less codec, and it finally gave me out a 22 minute and 35 seconds long video which size was 46 gigabytes.

Once the video was done, I couldn't really judge it and see if it worked out or not, because it was meant to be screened in the space, so I had to wait until the moment that the installation would be up.

Part III.

Reflections after the installation

7. Talking about the installation

Everything went on as planned. Three days of work in the exhibition space were enough to set up the work the way I wanted. Thankfully I didn't have to make any compromises. I mounted the projector and the computer up on the ceiling. I painted the projection wall. I fixed some details in the space and cleaned up. The installation was looking good.

Once the installation was up, it was time to see everything as a visitor and not only as the creator. I had to be objective and criticize myself in order to see how the installation really ended up being, what could have been done in a different way, see the potentials of the work and see if or how I should go on with that project.

After the opening of the exhibition, I spent some hours watching the videos. Although I had been working for such a long time with the material it was one of the few times, that - from the viewers point of view - I did not feel boredom or even full of images and information. It felt as in real life. Bringing a part of real life in the installation space in such a way, eliminated the made up space between the video and the viewer. In the installation the viewer is able to focus only on the portraits without having to be distracted by anything else. They are just observing what I am forcing them to observe without thinking that what they are seeing is not part of real life.

I was surprised by the comments of other visitors, when they told me that they more or less felt the same. They believed that this happened because of the simplicity of the installation, the way that the video was shot, the quality of the image and the relaxing and pleasant environment of the installation. I believe that all that is more or less true. Or at least this is also the way I feel it. Although as the creator I can see some mistakes and things that shouldn't have been as they came out. For example, there was some general shakiness which was because of the wind in combination with the very high zoom of the camera and also some wobbly artifacts because because of my misuse of the DOF adapter. These were technical mistakes and my goal is not to repeat them in my future projects.

Being in the installation, one can feel as a pure observer; it inspires the will to really observe the people being filmed, even if they are doing nothing, or are not "important" individuals. It brings out a psychographical feeling. The viewer comes really close to

7. *Talking about the installation*



Figure 7.0.1.: *Giorgos Chloros, Videoportraits 1 (2010), Installation View*

those people and is somehow tries to create a personality that they fit in. This work really reflects my personal feelings about the others, my feelings about observance, about life.

During the assessments, many people referred to the term voyeurism in relation to my work. Voyeurism's principal characteristic is that the voyeur is not in direct visual contact with the subject and of course the subject is unaware of being observed. Although voyeurism is highly connected with sexual interest. It is related to the observance of intimate behaviors, such as sexual activity or other activities of private nature. Since the beginning, my project's main idea was to observe people in public spaces, to see how they behave when they are in public but at the same time alone in their "bubble" surrounded by their own thoughts. Therefore on my understanding of voyeurism, I had no intension to observe people in private moments and I had no voyeuristic intensions. In that sense I could easier see myself as a spy than a voyeur. What I did, I would call it observance more voyeurism.

At the same time, while discussing about my work, the discussion went towards other artists that have been dealing with the same topic as I am. The Swedish artist Ulf Lundin was brought into the discussion and more specifically his works *Pictures of a Family* and *Station*. In the first work he has been taking thousands of pictures of a family that he had been "spying" on and in the second he has been filming people waiting in a train station. In one of his interviews¹ that I've read, he describes his motivations and his interpretation

¹ *A conversation between Ulf Lundin and Niclas Östlind. [8]*

7. *Talking about the installation*



Figure 7.0.2.: *Giorgos Chloros, Videoportraits 1 (2010), Installation View*

of his work in the same way I do. He doesn't see his projects as voyeuristic ones, but as something natural and right. He is also thinking about the distance and the relationship between the subject and the observer. The fact that other artists are working on the same thoughts as I am and that they are working in the same way, makes me feel that what I am doing is right and safe, as Lucas Samaras has mentioned. As I said in a previous chapter, this is what is giving me the impetus to go on and it doesn't prevent me from doing what I have in my own mind.

Now, from a safe position, I can say that I am glad that I had to abandon my plans for the three-channel video installation. Since I started working on the concept of my work only a few months before the exhibition; working on a simple installation in which I knew that I could have control of everything, was wise. It would have definitely been more difficult to work on a three-channel installation. I would had to have more material to work with and I would had to have to solve everything times three or even more. In the case of a bigger installation, the space and the light conditions wouldn't have been ideal. My whole installation would have to be very tight and packed and for sure the feeling that it would give out wouldn't have been as relaxing or pleasant. Technically, in order to work in a brighter space, I would have had to work with much more powerful equipment to which I didn't have access. The result would have ended up being a disaster. Although keeping things easy and safe is not the best thing for an artist has to do. On the other hand, that sounds tempting and looks as a big goal to achieve in an upcoming

7. *Talking about the installation*

installation.

I believe with this installation I achieved my goal. As a viewer, I am giving out exactly what I intended to show. I cannot really tell if Bruce Nauman's phrase about the importance of an artwork, can apply to my work, but I believe that at least it is close.

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