

How do you teach something no one can see? And if you can't see it, how do you know if it's any good?

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This file contains the extended abstract for the above conference contribution.

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Extended Abstract

This session begins from the premise that art is an event of materiality; not simply an object of matter, but a phenomenological field no less of absence and withdrawal, from place, of actions - in effect, resulting in a site that is estranged from all forms, for makers and viewers, students and teachers. We discuss this paradox of materiality between the physical, intimate and sensed, and material formings of the virtual, distant and visual. The site of this forming may be where we can say teaching and dialogue traverse; akin to a gap of the kind discussed in John Dewey's art and experience. An invisibility revealed, indicative of revelation and implosion.

To support this, our joint theoretical paper applies key contexts to propose that artworks are indicative of elements and not productions of "things" (Merleau-Ponty/Levinas). The concept of clearing (as a means by which materials of making are absorbed in the realisation of the work) discloses an ontology of site beyond exteriority and aesthetic appearance (Heidegger) - an intersubjectivity that emerges where "the visible is pregnant with the invisible" (Merleau-Ponty) and, in contrast to the functionality of material (Heidegger), "memory makes the past available to me for my future" (Levinas) through that exchange of expression and feeling (Dufrenne).

Practice - be it physical or virtual - is the unpacking of actions and events. It is also the means by which we determine the artist's success, through evaluation of the visual and the sensorial (i.e. that which is hidden by the visual). Practice is therefore also teaching and learning how to sense through the eyes. Our key contexts unpack the challenges of this teaching and learning, proposing methods through which these challenges may be connected and subsequently overcome. Burgoyne also elaborates on this by referencing a selection of drawing performance works.

The reciprocity between teaching and learning may be concealed by the knowledge that we bring to a subject - and by the fact that our experience of the invisible (art) is an experience in which we co-create between a pre-reflective situation of art's raw facticity and the application of artistic languages, processes and methodologies. Discussing and teaching art may be a paradoxical phenomenon, existing as it does between

the visual, the physical and the mental. As such, it evolves at an interspace between past and future that is present through its dispersal; indeed, as Levinas suggests, this "non-representability is the surplus of the lived body over the representation of it" (2015:43).

The presentation unpacks the paradoxical nature of making, its comprehension and teaching. In this, erasure and concealment are proposed to be the means through which to reveal the concealment that is inherent within art-working and making, as one set of assemblage unforms and another emerges in that reterritorialisation and future forming. In doing so, we reflect on the value and challenges of agency, and the paradox of radiating meaning and illuminating sensing through the very concealment inherent within that material process. We also reflect on the resulting potential of these distinct phenomena of the sensorial-yet-invisible and the seen-yet-distant.

References

1. Mensch, James R. (2015) *Levinas's existential analytic*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.