

## INDEX

1. the SCREEN
2. THE human
3. distortion of existence
4. "after-Space"
5. Venezia
6. The Project

1. Smartphone / P.E.D - portable electronic device / social media / media platforms / web / "informational bomb" / hertzian space / virtuality (description, void / vacuum / cybersickness / loneliness / cyber space as mental space / exposure / N.V.E - Networked Virtual Environment / "il virtuale e uno stato del reale" / artificial world / no time or space limitations / reshaping of temporal dimensions and boundaries / personal "cloud" (digital dimension, physical dimension, geographical dimension) / 3 dimensional stage of subjectivity / biological stage /  
social media taken outside / IMMERSION / interactivity / constant access / smartphone as a SCREEN

2. Man + SCREEN / man + virtuality / identity crisis / screen as a prosthesis / incarnations / moral exhibitionism / place of staging of social activity / new human / useless body / non organic extensions of senses "un corpo che si traduce in entità fantasmatica eminentemente attiva" / "corpo come finestra, luogo di passaggio" / forms of presence / filters / MIRROR / uncanniness in a reflection /  
screen as a window / screen as a portal

3. Deformation of space through the screen / the eye / terrain vague, drosscape, vacantland, friche, interscape, non-luoghi / portal  
time? / reality refracted / urban phobias / fobic abstraction / modern paranoia / disembodiment / copy of a copy / the "double" / shredding of space / blurring / erasure / shrinking / exploded space ( fragmented into singular ele-

ments ) / space as pure type / bipolarity of the conscious space / double existence / spatial coordinates / stratification / reality as simulacrum / is reality even real ? / impossible perspectives / city as a state of mind / low resolution / geometrization of territory / "monstrous" architecture / "schizophrenic grid" / boullée - architecture made of shadows / architecture of death, for the dead ? / mobile architecture / transparency / repetition / stage / PSEUDOENVIRONMENT / processing of perception / reality defracted / "lidar" scanning system - a new non human perception /

4. How does this new space look? / New space / shadows? lights? / a-physical space / screen as a MIRROR / uncanny / ugliness / "dark space " / pure space (nothing but its demands) / "After-space"

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5. Venezia / Analysis of its "urbanity" / inferno / copy ... (key concepts analysed before analysed once again here in a concrete? context) / a city virtually without reidents / virtual ? / why venice? / ghost town / N.D.E - Near Death Experience / elements of venice / water / constant change of perception / screens everywhere /

6. Project / San Marco? / eternity for venice / material / void negative of a positive / san marco on the moon /

CHAPTER 1 :

THE SCREEN

"It is estimated that by the end of this year 4 billion people, which is 60% of the world population, will be connected to the internet, and most of them through mobile devices".<sup>1</sup>

Our living space is now a "hertzian" system, a living "cyberbody" where reality keeps changing and we are just objects inside it, spectators of our own lives. Various technologies have changed and shaped us as city users. "Virtuality" is an important word now, and an important place. The process of instant communication and access to virtuality, in a way, provokes a disembodiment, a loss of the sense of space and its borders, its *realness*.

Reality becomes virtual while virtuality has never been more real.

The "Pygmalions-s spectacles" by Stanley G.Weinbaum, a short novel written in 1935!, is "probably the first comprehensive and specific fictional model for virtual reality."<sup>2</sup> Here the main character meets a professor who had recently designed a sort of immersive mechanism or goggles that enabled "a movie that gives one sight and sound, taste, smell, and touch. You are in the story, you speak to the shadows (characters) and they reply, and instead of being on a screen, the story is all about you, and you are in it." He tries the mechanism accessing a sort of parallel world - Paracosma , very different from his own, unable to understand if what he is experiencing all along is reality or an illusion. He exits this virtual world only to find out that reality is also somehow virtual.

"-But what is reality?" asked the gnomelike man. He gestured at the tall banks of buildings that loomed around Central Park, with their countless window glowing like the cave fires of a city of Cro-Magnon people. "All is dream, all is illusion; I am your vision as you are mine." But sensations are mental phenomena. They exist in our minds. How, then, do we know that the objects themselves do not exist only in our minds?"

- "If your interest is taken, your mind supplies that." <sup>3</sup>

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ders, its *realness*.

But how does this virtual look like? A sort of vacuum? a lightless space without a reference? where everything is everywhere at the same moment but simultaneously there's nothing, just our own projection. Maybe it's not three-dimensional, maybe not even four-dimensional, perhaps it doesn't have any dimensional scale, no measure, no time. Cyberspace is a sort of "mental space", but there can't be a description of it. Of course, you can't describe what you can't see, or can you?

Char Davies, a Canadian artist has a series of installations exploring virtual appearance and how a human functions inside it - "Osmose" (1995) / "Ephemere" (1998). An immersive virtual reality experience incorporating an interactive head-mounted stereoscopic display and a motion-tracking vest, where participants float through an imagined landscape by breathing in and out.

It explores and visually shows the "feeling" of crossing these limits or borders between different states or environments, all virtual. An infinite mass filled with random elements/objects intersected with a sort of grid that generates planes inside the space, an endless plain or succession of planes that completely distort the 3dimensional concept of a space, monochrome place, filled with some sort of horror. A place digitally designed by someone else, of course. What's interesting is its side effects, the psychological, emotional, non-physical and physical consequences and sensations, of being in a unreal and extremely artificial space (place) and interacting with it while moving, a scary feeling of being absolutely inside, immersed in a unnatural dimensional form. What if putting those goggles on, you forgot for a second that the "portal" to that world is through your eyes, that the object generating this "sensations" is simply a device put on your head, what if you forgot how to get out? Would you wonder around in an endless grid in search of a door? Char Davies's example is a very digital, artificial reality but what if it looked exactly the same as our own real world? What if i was sitting in my room wearing VR goggles and that "other" virtual reality would look exactly like the real one and I would still see



"Pygmalion's spectacles" by Stanley G. Weinbaum



Char Davies "Osmose" (1995)

my room, from the same angle. Which one is real? If I took them off only to find out that I'm staring at the same exact view, would I try to take them off again, just endlessly trying to turn back to the real one? maybe never actually finding it...In animation there is a thing called "uncanny valley" which "is a hypothesis in the field of aesthetics which holds that when features look and move almost, but not exactly, like natural beings, it causes a response of revulsion among some observers. The "valley" refers to the dip in a graph of the comfort level of beings as subjects move toward a healthy, natural likeness described in a function of a subject's aesthetic acceptability."<sup>4</sup> That is why while CGI generated human animations begin to look almost exactly as a real humans, our brain cant quite grasp the vagueness of this and we experience a strange feeling of unease towards this "dolls", they look "creepy" to us. And in fact when the line between physical and digital city starts to get blurry things might start to get weird and confusing too. Digital reality will start to look more and more like the real one reaching a point when *that other place* will look a bit *strangely familiar* but not exactly the same ...*uncanny*.

Nowadays, advances in fabrication technology, reinforce the unconscious doubt about whether, a hand for example, is a prosthetic or a real one. According to Masahiro Mori "when we realize that a hand, that at first site looked real, is in fact artificial, we end up experiencing an eerie sensation. [...] thus, we lose our sense of relevance, and the hand becomes then uncanny". If it starts to move though, this eeriness sensation intensifies. Freud's concern on this issue was about the difference between a person's relationship to his body and such a prosthesis, which keep tries to be and yet cannot be the self. For him, consciousness was itself a prosthetic attachment, worn as a kind of "garment" like any other tool. [Wigley, 1991]

What is it, that convinces you that the colors and speed (for example) of that exact reality you are seeing, are correct and the original ones? "The Decelerator Helmet" is a project by and L.Potthast, that "offers an experi-



mental approach to an essential subject of our globalized, fast moving society. The technical reproducible senses are consigned to an apparatus which allows the user a perception of the world in slow motion. The float of time as apparently invariant constant is broken and subjected under the users control."<sup>5</sup> Its amazing to think about having the possibility of changing the speed we live or see our cities, the colors it has, its volume and textures.

"What may not be so obvious is that our "direct" experience of the world through our senses is virtual reality too. For our external experience is never direct; nor do we even experience the signals in our nerves directly... What we experience directly is a virtual-reality rendering, conveniently generated for us by our unconscious minds from sensory data plus complex inborn and acquired theories (i.e. programs) about how to interpret them."<sup>6</sup>

Black Mirror is a British Tv show which features themes on modern society and some consequences of new technologies. It explores different situations where new technological gadgets or realities appear in our lives and how they influence our behaviour or habits. The series analyzes, criticizes our society and our dependence on technology, exaggerating some of nowadays issues and phenomenas linked with virtuality. Portraying moments of hipotetical future with moments filled with a sort of "horror" of a possible life where our small devices change drastically our existence. One of the episodes shows a version of the future where a sort of "grain" is implanted into our heads and records our lives constantly giving the possibility to rewatch it anytime, the characters find themselves just rewatching their lives constantly, going back to the past sometimes even while simultaneously living the present. Another episode "takes place in a world in which the population is apparently doomed to a life of meaningless toil enlivened only by continual entertainment and distraction courtesy of omnipresent gizmos and screens."<sup>7</sup> Each episode has a different setting and reality but they all resemble our present life and dont seem so futuristic, unreal or too far away. It all seems like realities that could easily happen, or that our own realities could easily become those.

"Medium", "Secret", "Meetup", "Tinder", "VK", "WhatsApp", "Vine", "Instagram", "YouTube", "MyMFB", "Twoo", "Pinterest", "Tumblr", "Snapchat", "Reddit", "Flickr", "Disqus", "Kik", "SoundCloud", "Spotify", "Peach", "Periscope", "Blab", "Renren", "Xing", "LinkedIn", "Instagram", "Twitter", "GoogleMaps" ; "Facebook". . . . .The WEB and it's social media platforms and apps devour our everyday lives and transform us as humans. Our role and function has changed as we live in the age of an "informational bomb", where Information is being "pumped" into us in short powerful fragments, that feed us constantly, never leaving us satisfied. Scrolling through a Facebook wall every day, we become addicted to constantly finding out and learning about anything or anyone anywhere. We need a constant update on "things".

However, we take as a starting and main point in this analysis - virtuality accessed just through smartphones and any other types of mobile devices of this sort - P.E.Ds (portable electronic device(s))<sup>8</sup> We analyze the dynamic virtuality, the one you can take outside your house and carry in your pocket, the ever-present kind.

This virtuality does not just separately exist in some dark corner of our apartment, it is not constant, fixed or geographically coherent, that would make it too real. Whenever we step out of the house with our phones, we take this virtuality outside. Its interesting to try to understand what happens whenever this partial or not immersion happens inside any form of urbanity - lets say, what happens when we are crossing a street in a city while interacting virtually with the phone - what does the phone change?, how do you see other people?, how fast do you move?, how do you see the surroundings? Your perceptions of the context changes, not just spatially or physically but also temporarily. You project yourself into a strange sort of space ( virtual inside the real or real inside the virtual ) and you or your projection move inside it while moving inside the city, generating a sort of double reality movement, a space inside a space, an act inside an act. It's like constantly carrying a space with you, a mobile space, and each of us , carrying a different one, generates an infinite grid of realities that move

inside the city. What corresponds between these realities, what stays the same, what changes? Do reality and virtuality spaces ever coincide? A Facebook user might feel sometimes that someone who just came online, felt like that someone just entering the same room. That is a spatial perception, and its totally real, the sense of sharing a virtual space feels almost as real as sharing the same room. Virtual spatial and dimensional perception is perceivable, but perhaps not visually.

This syndrome of spatial "double existence" appears in the persisting desire (and already developed skill) of being simultaneously in several spaces, often not compatible.<sup>9</sup>

Whats the difference of us mentally disappearing out of a concrete space while reading a book? a magazine? we also kind of fly away, blurring our own reality. The difference is the interactivity of the P.E.D(s). It is indeed an interactive form.

Studioazzurro, a group of artists that have several projects that explore the interactivity with virtuality. "Tavoli" (1995) an interactive video installation : "six tables, six still figures: a woman laying, a fly walking on the table, the sound of a water drop. This sensation of apparent calm is abruptly interrupted when someone touches one of the images: they get activated and react. The relationship between virtual and real is verified through familiar materials, without any type of technological structure: the space becomes fragmented, virtuality and physicality become one. The process from the image of a simple object of contemplation to an interactive experience that pushes the observer to a dialogue encloses the main idea of this project."<sup>10</sup>

The project explores the duality of virtual and real. An interaction with virtuality being at the same time present in the real world blurs the borders between real and fake, real and virtual. . . . .reality is virtual anyways.

"Communications carry information, that is not integrated into the spacial form, its alienated from it, by its capacity of being turned off or on. Carriers of information are aggressive in their potentiality and magnetic seductiveness - a turned off TV seems pointless hence scary."<sup>11</sup>



"They Live" John Carpenter



Studioazzurro instalation "Dove va tutta questa gente"



"Black Mirror"



"Black Mirror"

We have constant access to it and it has constant access to us. *We constantly desire each other.*

But can we really switch it off? A "digital detox" has been something many tried and supported, but "disconnection of the digital world is just an illusion: even when we are disconnected for a whole day, we don't disappear from the digital orbit."<sup>12</sup> Someone texts us, tags us, tweets us... so it means we exist, we are present even being offline. And in a way virtuality is totally integrated into our reality, erasing the borders between them, cause "there is no virtual reality now, there is just one reality"<sup>12</sup>.

Information is being consumed through a screen, any screen - our computer, our phone, our tablet, our tv, any electronic billboard...etc. But not-electronic devices should be called screens too, any plane is now just an informational channel, any x-y plane is just carrying information for us. We stare at our phone in the middle of Venice in the same way we stare at a shop window, we stare at a screen in the metro in the same way we stare at a facade... We could call all windows, facades, billboards and planes SCREENS. "They Live" is a 1988 American satirical science fiction action horror film written and directed by John Carpenter. It shows a city full of billboards that have clear messages for the people and serves as a critique of our ideology. "They Live is definitely one of the forgotten masterpieces of the Hollywood Left. ... The sunglasses ... allow you to see the real message beneath all the propaganda, glitz, posters and so on. ... When you put the sunglasses on you see the dictatorship in democracy, the invisible order which sustains your apparent freedom."<sup>13</sup>

This P.E.D.s we analyzed before are essentially just screens. A "smartphone" as a term was coined in the late 90's but its *content* is changing and evolving constantly, as technology is being innovated, so the term "smartphone" or any other new terms that could be appearing are a bit unstable and can become obsolete. It's true that the fact that all of these technologies actually possess a screen could also change in any near future but, for now let's consider the concept of "SCREEN" as any two

dimensional plane through which we “ingest” any types of information, mostly in a digital form.

“The “black mirror” (...) is the one you’ll find on every wall, on every desk , in the palm of every hand : the cold, shinny screen of a Tv, a monitor, a smartphone”. <sup>14</sup>

CHAPTER 2 :  
THE HUMAN



*"I have this thing...its attached to me all of the time, and I suspect I see the reality through it.*

*Is what i see (through it) THE reality? Is it even real?  
Its a SCREEN, and somehow its a continuation of my body  
and an extension of my senses.*

*I can see through it, i can even see worlds far away, I can teleport and be in two, three or more places at the same time.  
I can see the past, and sometimes even the future.*

*I can also feel...touch through it , in a very disambiguous way.  
Its like another body part feels something I cant touch with my  
"normal" hand. But everything feels the same in a way...*

*Every taste or smell is just a memory now, past memories of  
past sensations...without the screen.*

*Time is different through my screen, im not sure i can even  
perceive time, does it pass? is it still? What is time anyways...?*

*That space, is it a space that i can sense through the screen?  
Is it a big or a small space? Im not sure...  
perception changed. i feel the world is just a big endless  
house, and i constantly enter and exit different rooms. Some-  
how I never get lost."*

## the self

Virtual space erases our primary material boundaries transforming us in a way into moral exhibitionists. We become incarnations of ourselves, surrogates, since social platforms and other virtual spaces become "stages" for our social activities. Indeed our constant "posting", "uploading", "commenting", "sharing", etc. exposes our personal lives to extreme levels that in a way erases any notion of privacy. Our bodies become a sort of "window", a "transitional" space for that other reality. Our authentic identities get lost in an infinite cyber-environment. We become transparent in a way, transparent and lonely.

"Detachment of communicational space from the bodily one provokes a bipolarity of the conscious space, as a frequent symptom of cultural schizophrenia. The subject of "double existence" is narcissus, who is doomed with a castrational complex: denying its bodily "I", and choosing the virtual world of reflections, he overloads the world with signs of his own physical existence and presence". <sup>11</sup>

"Ghost in the shell" is a 1995 comic based animation by Mazamune Shirow, that explores the dichotomy of body vs mind / shell vs ghost, how "our dynamics, ourselves and our spaces are all one and the same". The director draws attention to different perceptions of their chaotic city, where all the character's dilemmas are also represented in the shots of the included architecture. As most bodies in this futuristic world are at least partially artificial, they locate their identities in their ghosts or their minds, but knowing that these can be hacked, memory, identity and humanity are all called into question.

"-You are talking about redefining my identity, I want to guarantee I will still be myself.

-There isn't one, why would you wish to? All things change in a dynamic environment.

Your effort to remain what you are is what limits you." <sup>15</sup>

Indeed this *robbery* of our own identities and *selves* by different forms of

technology is not a new concept but remains actual. In fact this phenomena changes and develops but remains the same in a way - we are weak against this attractive vacuum that different types of technological devices offer us access to.

### the body

Man + screen. Apart from changing our every day life, our routines and behavior, does the screen change us physically, does it change us as animals, us a human system...? In a way the screen augments our perception, exaggerates or numbs our senses. These are somehow constantly filtered by the screen, by the virtuality it offers. Sound and sight seem to be the most affected senses. It's part of our lives but has it already become part of our bodies too? The smartphone is a sort of prosthesis, an extension of our hand, and with it of our senses. Are we a hybrid now? We used to be a machine...what are we now?

Stelarc, is an artist " whose works focus heavily on extending the capabilities of the human body. As such, most of his pieces are centered on his concept that the human body is obsolete."<sup>16</sup> In 2007 he had an ear surgically implanted into his left arm, stating that that way was much more practical and coherent, transforming completely the idea of our body being *unchangable*. He also explores the cyborgization of our bodies, its direct attachment to technological devices, how they could change us or have changed us already. His approach is more of a *mechanical man* concept , man as a cyborg, human as a robot. But the idea of having the possibility to change our body, and the idea of the body as a separate thing beaing able to transform itself, adjust and adapt in such a physical way (the ear) to the new uses is interesting. Thinking of hipotetical future transformations not only in our society, city, devices and technologies, but our bodies too. So our constant use of technologies could change not only our minds and habits but our body also! Recently, Japanese cell



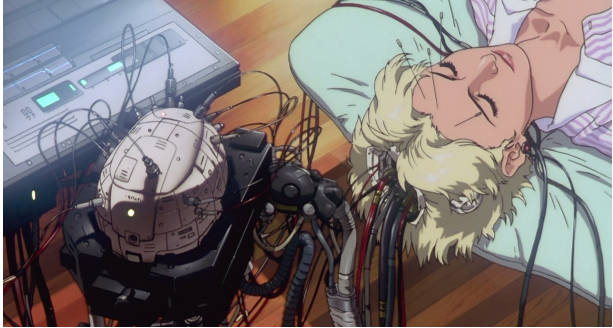
Thomas Bayrle collage "people"



Stelarc's third ear



Hans Hollein: MOBILES BÜRO - MOBILE OFFICE 1969



"Ghost in the shell"



Schlemmer's masks - identity

phone provider NTT Docomo released an alert on their public Twitter account, reminding users of the side-effects of over-doing it with the mobile devices, and urging them to take frequent breaks and switch up the way they hold onto their precious lifelines, referring to the hipotesis that people who use smartphones too much started noticing pain and even temporary deformity of the pinky finger.

I am not saying that we are slaves of our technology, nor is this a futuristic distopical argument, I believe our enslavement, whenever it occasionally happens, is totally conscious. But its interesting to analyze the effects of our ever present devices.

We constantly look down now, to our screen, forgetting sometimes of this other dimension where we are actually walking. Constantly using one hand to endlessly scroll the screen, as if our scrolling with the thumb was a way of walking too, just in a totally different dimension. But lets face it, we are just touching a peace of glass...nothing more, so how do we feel now? touch? Are we slowly caring less and less about texture inside that virtual reality? or are we mixing our live experience with the virtual one? Do we need now a differentiation of texture that much? or is it all visual now? - *whatever looks fluffy is fluffy, even if its actually made of glass.*

Whenever we travel or visit a new place, what is the first thing that we do? Photograph. It seems, lately, that the screens are our eyes. We cant experience anything anymore without recording it somehow first. Maybe it's just an attempt to immortalize certain moments. We crave for the possibility of later showing, sharing our experiences. In a way we developed a new necessity to constantly share our lives, through images and videos that maybe our eyes didn't even witness. Instead of proving that "i was there" our photos just scream "my device was there". Its just that maybe, sometimes, the world looks better on a screen.

But our addiction to be social contradictorily makes us lonely.



Our body is a sort of window now, an open window that gives access to an artificial world...a sort of transitional space...It's interesting in fact to analyze ourselves as a space, as a place. An active transitional space that together with a sort of portal generates/creates a new different dimension. Transparent, translucent...we are in a way disintegrating at certain moments of the day.

If we could analyze our species right now, pretending to be outsiders, the "bigcityspecies" would maybe look like : *tall men attached to a sort of device that serves as a kind of portal to a mirrored existence*. Indeed the screen is a sort of mirror. Its a constant dichotomy, of things we see through it and ways we see ourselves through it. There is a sort of uncanniness in this reflection. The mirror deforms the space, deforms ourselves in it, deforms our faces.

"if "the feeling of the uncanny implies the return to that particular organization of space where everything is reduced to inside and outside and where inside is also the outside" then the space of the MIRROR would precisely meet this condition: a space of normal binocular, three-dimensional vision, modified by being derived of depth. This would lead to the conflation , on the same visual plane, of the familiar (seen) and the strange (projected). In the case of the mirror stage, this would involve a complex superimposition of the reflected image of the subject and, conflated with this , the projected image of the subjects desire - the other: being simultaneously itself and the other, familiar and nevertheless strange, the subject is that which has no face and where face exists from the point of view of the other" <sup>17</sup>

"To these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space, dark space where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces to which he is the "convulsive possession". <sup>18</sup>

CHAPTER 3 :

DISTORTION OF  
EXISTENCE

"The Golden Calf" is an installation by the artist Jeffrey Shaw done in 1994 that shows the hybridization and ambiguity of virtuality mixed with reality. We are standing in front of an empty pedestal in a room, there's an LCD screen laying on the pedestal : we can take the screen in our hands and look through it at the pedestal and while doing so we see that in the screen the pedestal is not empty, there's a shining "golden calf" standing on it. We move and move the screen and the image generated on the LCD screen moves too, as if we were pointing a camera at the pedestal, just that on the screen it's a different pedestal, or is it the same? A complete mixture and confusion between virtuality and reality takes place. A literal example of how "a screen deforms a space".

The *screens* work as *portals* that lead us to a different understanding and sometimes vision of surroundings. The portals transform our reality into an infinite space, where the boundaries between virtual and real are constantly blurred and shifted, transforming *all* into a sort of stereoreal territory where all the *places* become a-physical, mute and transitory.

"Place", a concrete space of experience and act as "here", is dissolved into a boundless "everywhere". Placeless space is turned into an empty amorphous dynamic <sup>eld.19</sup>

Reality is refracted while we process its perception, which in a way keeps updating, moving, shifting, deforming...all the time. The term of "derealization", coined by a french philosopher in 1898, represents a condition where familiar or every day objects, people or places suddenly seem strange, new, foreign. "... a feeling of detachment or estrangement from one's self .The individual may feel like an automaton or as if he or she is living in a dream or a movie. There may be a sensation of being an outside observer of one's mental processes, one's body, or parts of one's body."

<sup>20</sup> A concept somehow opposed to "deja-vu" where a situation or place seems "too familiar" or "already lived" while apparently unknown or new. Both concepts are interesting to analyze in a condition of our constant movement between different realities and *moments* with the help of ever present portals.

The word "space" in the modern use moves further and further away from the material essence of the concept itself, becoming a universal metaphor of any arbitrary set.<sup>9</sup>

Our perception of reality and its dimensional forms is not permanent, it's always temporal and even ephemeral, ever changing, ever shifting. Virtuality and reality just came up to create one single endless space. Sometimes we feel like looking at ourselves, like out of our own body. With so many copies of ourselves online we sometimes get lost in which of those is real and not just a fake hologram copy. Thou maybe theres no hard copy at all, the original *one* cant be distinguished from the fake ones anymore. We function inside a very complex system - all of us carry a sort of screen, that serves as a portal to a virtual space where maybe there we are again carrying a sort of screen that serves as a portal to a virtual space... Its a system inside a system that seems endlessly complex, endlessly blurry and confusing. So sometimes perhaps we cant recognize a place, virtual or real, or a totally new place could seem very familiar. We scroll through so much information every day that perhaps everything and everyone should already be familiar...or maybe the opposite, maybe everything should seem new...one again. Phsycolgical disorders that deal with spatial conditions have existed for ages since the modern society started to develop: - phatologies like urban fobias, urban malaria, fobic urban abstraction, agoraphobia, spiritual terror of space...and others. Maybe now we will generate new types of phobias, new *soul sicknesses* , new paranoias and new types of urban fears. For sure there are people who are scared of *the real world*, those for whom virtuality has a more defined and real form than reality itself, those for whom everything is just easier online. Especially teenagers that were born surrounded by smart-phones computers and tablets, learning how to scroll before learning how to speak or walk. A different *training* as city users may lead to totally new and unknown consequences.

Time? It's gone. I dont think we have any time perception now. We move in a timeless vacuum now, where everyting is instant. Instant messages with instant responses, instant shifting of place, instant answers to any question...every action is instant. So the dimension of time is disappearing

in a way, transforming and deforming our perception of any reality.

"Internet and mobile media are getting rid of time and space limitations and are changing the spatial and temporal dimension of social life and spatial and temporal boundaries."<sup>20</sup>

"The communicational system wraps the space, transforming it into pure time, as it happens in the metro or airplane."<sup>9</sup>

Indeed being inside a plane or metro, space transforms into time. Our context remains constantly the same, as if it was motionless, we can't see how we move inside the city, we just kind of enter a different dimension, as if there was not space at all, just a picture...the only thing that changes is time...the only thing that moves is time. You take a plane in one part of the world and land in another, but during the flight your window view doesn't really give you any spatial reference, it could have no windows at all, nothing would change...the only thing that moves there is time, the fact that you arrive at point B hours after (or before). This resembles in a way virtual reality...at least has similar characteristics. Entering the metro, you take a train and sit while scrolling your phone till you get out at your stop. You are in a transitional space, transitional *moment*.

Everything looks fake, unauthentic now. Online existence generates constant copies of the same. We have profiles on endless sites, that constantly request our personal data, creating and abandoning at the same time pieces of ourselves all over the web. We are endless copies of ourselves...and maybe space suffers the same phenomena. Everything seems already seen now, or similar to something else, wherever we see it virtually or not. Again, what if reality is virtual, fake or not even there. What if reality is not actually reality...Scary...to come home only to realize that everything you own has been replaced by an exact same copy... At the end of the 1970s, artist Ed Ruscha left an artwork – a fake rock – somewhere in the vast Mojave desert. The "installation" is called "Rocky II". So somewhere in the desert, there is a *fake* rock, sitting there among other *real* rocks. Imagine for a second walking somewhere surrounded



Tamas Waliczky "The Landscape" 1997



Jeffrey Shaw "The Golden Cal" 1994



Pierre Bismuth, Where is Rocky II? Trailer, 2014.



Aldous Huxley, Brave New World





"You are afraid of it because it is stronger than you; you hate it because you are afraid of it; you love it because you cannot subdue it to your will. Only the unsubduable can be loved."

— Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*

by nature and realizing that the rock you are standing on is actually made of plastic...wouldn't that scare you? wouldn't that provoke an endless questioning of the originality of the surroundings...of ourselves. (in a way similar to "Truman show of 1998) (In fact French artist Pierre Bismuth has spent a decade trying to find it – with the help of a private detective and a film crew, transforming this journey into a film called "Where is Rocky II" to be released in 2016.)

"The narrator is tormented by the thought that he is ever accompanied by an invisible double, a spirit that he cannot see but nevertheless resides in his house, drinks his wine..., controls his actions and thoughts;... he develops a case of what, in the context of our analysis, might be called advanced agoraphobia : barricading the windows and doors of his room with iron...in order to kill the apparently trapped other. But beset with doubts as to whether he had actually killed this invisible specter, he was finally forced to kill himself." <sup>21</sup>

Tamás Waliczky is an animation and new media artist, that has a series of installations ("The Trilogy" - "The Garden"; "The Forest"; "The Way" 1992-1994 ; "The Landscape" - 1997) that in a way defy our sense of dimensional perception, generating a sort of *impossible perspectives*. Using elements like endless viewpoints, inverted vanishing points (bigger-closer) he generates unusual weird and kind of *hard to watch* "videos" or videoinstallations where the rules of how to look at an object and understand it, change. The *situations* in the videos somehow seem wrong but are simply following different rules. One of the works is called "The Landscape" and consists of a simple black and white video of a village under the rain. Suddenly he stops the rain transforming it into a still image while continuing to move around the village, this generates a sort of *organic* three dimensional abstract grid inside the actual space we are moving through, and this grid is created by the raindrops, frozen in the air. Its interesting the analysis between time and space, how a space can be *grided* just by stopping time for a second...how space can be just *grided*, how something can generate a grid of the space and its dimensions in such a powerful way. "This 3-D computer animation originally was designed to an opera-piece. The main question of the opera was how we perceive time.

The animation is about a small German village in a rainy day, and visualises the miraculous moment when all of a sudden time has been stopped. Therefore all the raindrops are frozen in the air, generating an organic, 3 dimensional grid of the space. The only living element in the animation is the virtual camera, which one moves through the village.” <sup>22</sup>

How can rain generate a grid? Imagine trying to trace it? A moving grid, a constantly moving grid...a moving / shifting / changing geometrization of space.

Though having all the idea of the new totally transparent transit space, human brain always finds the opposite alternative, idea doesn't simply conquer the world nowadays, to the action there's always an anti action, to the quality anti quality.

Fast food ideology created the opposite one - slow food.

As an alternative to scrolling the device reading the short texts and simple images appeared the term of so-called "long-reads", articles in internet magazines, that takes some time of yours and talk on topic widely.

To high-tech lovers there will be always the same amount of people who prefer classics.

To totally transit After Space will always be opposed The Stage, the symbol of stability and certainty. Together they would create After Space.

Architecture deals with the creation of qualified spaces, endowed with a particular culturally-adequate quality. These qualities are traditionally realized into : typologies, parameters and forms of space, which is supposed to respond to some established conventions (beauty) and rituals (usefulness).

This position stays true until culture functions strictly between controlled material borders and until the narrational potentiality of architecture is completely exhausted by material and spatial phenomena.<sup>9</sup>

What does it mean to have a location?

In XIX century objective location was becoming more essential – and eventually more natural – as new forms of expanded circulation, such as the national postal service, made it necessary for strangers, such as

postal officials, to be able to locate individual citizens.

Now, when each of us has a gadget that shows the location, no matter of that place, do we need that strict numeration yet? Your exact location stops being so essential, you can work from any place, receive post in any place and not be attached to a particular address.

This uncanny sense of not being at home where one should be most familiar indicates the extent to which what was called Haussmann's 'eviction' of Parisians from their own city in the mid-19th century had assumed a broader currency in the rapidly modernizing cities of the early 20th century. "Home" becomes more as a place for the soul, than for any other needs. Everyone is searching more for the feeling of home, for what home is in times, when the borders of space are blurred.

"Neither home nor street nor city can now be thought apart from the media apparatus which redistributes the scale and speed of social interaction in their domains. " S.Maquire

"the solidity of our walls has increasingly given way to the restless luminosity of electronic screens. Looking through these strange windows we are invited to perceive the world as if divorced from bodily constraints. We see the world from where we are not, from where we have never been. Despite its everyday familiarity, this mode of disembodied perception – which can be equated in psychoanalytic terms with the fantasy of seeing from the place of the 'other' – retains a strong sense of the uncanny. " S.Maquire

Through the history of the XX century changes the idea of the window at home. It changed already, when it started to be possible to make windows of any size in the facade and when Le Corbusier was insisting on the long window on the facade, when appeared "framing" of the exterior, when totally dissolved the borders between outside and inside (Glass House). Now things are even more complicated with the appearance of new "window", not even one at each home, window-screen. With this "window" do we need view, sunlight, ability to open from our normal windows? What are the essential needs nowadays?

These days, being connected depends not on our distance from each other but from available communications technology. Most of the time, we

carry that technology with us. In fact, being alone can start to seem like a precondition for being together because it is easier to communicate if you can focus, without interruption, on your screen. In this new regime, a train station (like an airport, a café, or a park) is no longer a communal space but a place of social collection: people come together but do not speak to each other. Each is tethered to a mobile device and to the people and places to which that device serves as a portal.

To those who have lost a sense of physical connection, connectivity suggests that you make your own page, your own place. When you are there, you are by definition where you belong, among officially friended friends. To those who feel they have no time, connectivity, like robotics, tempts by proposing substitutions through which you can have companionship with convenience. A robot will always be there, amusing and compliant. When media are always there, waiting to be wanted, people lose a sense of choosing to communicate. Those who use BlackBerry smartphones talk about the fascination of watching their lives "scroll by." They watch their lives as though watching a movie.

The City looked different, to define obvious cultural and functional relation of the building not by shape, decorations and position but only by the level of transparency and size. What an interesting experience walk in totally dark cultural and religious spaces, sometimes cut on the floor with the small narrow opening, lifted over the ground, big floating volumes over the flat shadowed spaces, then interrupted by the blocks of semitransparent translucent cubes with open roofs letting you see clearly the sky only; and shaped defined, narrow and long corridors, vertical or horizontal vectors of movement. The intimacy chained with total openness of public spaces, private small ephemeral volumes representers of comfort and enclosure, full of silence that becomes dense if desired juxtaposed to the crowded light planes made of material of the area.

The new ways of levelling, new technologies of sound insulation and ability to include that nature in the complex organism of the new city would introduce The Model, the model of complex knowledge created by phi-

losophers and for for simple people. Suddenly the harmony was found.